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Seventy-second year

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Tuesday, 21 November 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Amendola/Mr. Lambertini	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Awad
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin-Nyoni
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations

Report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2331 (2016) (S/2017/939)

Letter dated 17 November 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/972)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations

Report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2331 (2016) (S/2017/939)

Letter dated 17 November 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/972)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Morocco, Myanmar, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, the Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and His Excellency Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

Mr. Fedotov and Mr. Chergui are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Vienna and Addis Ababa, respectively.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following individuals to participate in this meeting: Her Excellency Ms. Joanne Adamson, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; Her Excellency Ms. Madina Jarbussynova, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; and Mr. Ashraf El Nour, Director of the International Organization for Migration Office to the United Nations.

I propose that the Council invite the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations, to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/939, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2331 (2016).

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/972, which contains the text of a letter dated 17 November 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I warmly welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, and give him floor.

The Secretary-General: I thank the Security Council, under the presidency of Italy, for convening today's open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

Criminals and terrorists are capitalizing on and perpetuating the disorder and mayhem of conflict. To fund their crimes, they prey on the vulnerable. Their brutality knows no bounds. Sexual exploitation, forced labour, the removal of bodily organs and slavery are the tools of their trade. Terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and the Lord's Resistance Army are forcing women, boys and girls into dehumanizing servitude. Committed in the shadows, these actions are

serious abuses of human rights and may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In recent days, we have all been horrified by images of African migrants beings sold as goods in Libya. It is our collective responsibility to stop these crimes. We must act urgently to protect the human rights and dignity of migrant populations. That means bringing the perpetrators to justice; it means immediately increasing humanitarian aid; and it means helping the Libyan authorities to strengthen their own capacity to protect and provide for vulnerable men, women and children. But there is also an urgent need to create more opportunities for regular migration, to restore the integrity of the refugee protection regime and to increase the number of refugees resettled in the developed world. Slavery and other such egregious abuses of human rights have no place in the twenty-first century.

According to the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, issued by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), increasing numbers of victims trafficked from Iraq, Syria and Somalia are appearing in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. The Security Council has taken important steps against trafficking, including by unanimously adopting resolution 2331 (2016) last December and the draft resolution to be adopted this morning (S/2017/973). These texts call for the targeting of financial flows to traffickers. They urge every nation to adopt and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Along with the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1), which was affirmed by every nation in September of this year, we have built a framework for action rooted in international law. Cooperation, mutual legal assistance and information-sharing are the mainstays of our activities.

The Council has before it my first report (S/2017/939) on the implementation of resolution 2331 (2016), which documents the ongoing work of Member States and many parts of the United Nations system. These efforts need to be intensified. We must make full use of the data collection, analysis, tools and technical assistance provided by UNODC and other United Nations actors, particularly those operating in conflict and post-conflict situations. Better understanding of human trafficking markets and routes will strengthen analysis and prevention, and coordination will be crucial, including through the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons.

Trafficking is also a development issue. Preventing the situations that lead to trafficking means addressing poverty and exclusion, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must also do more to support the victims and survivors of trafficking. Indeed, they should be treated as victims of crime and not detained, prosecuted or punished for unlawful activities in which they were compelled to engage in order to survive. I also urge Governments, the private sector and civil society to support the Blue Heart Campaign and the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The international community's commitment is being tested. We need to show the world our determination to end human trafficking, help its many victims and hold those responsible accountable for their crimes.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: Today's meeting demonstrates the Security Council's strong commitment to confronting the crime of trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict situations.

I thank the Italian presidency for its initiative and for inviting the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to brief the Council.

This meeting is also crucial, as it examines the progress made in implementing resolution 2331 (2016). The draft resolution to be adopted today (S/2017/973) sets new goals and targets in combating human trafficking.

Since the Council's last meeting on this topic (see S/PV.7898), large movements of vulnerable refugees and migrants, driven out by conflict, have continued to be exploited by traffickers. We were all outraged by images showing that criminals are openly operating slave markets in Libya, where people are sold like commodities. I join the Secretary-General in condemning these appalling acts, and take note of the assurances given by the Libyan Government that this case is being investigated. Our collective horror at this news serves an important purpose; it can quicken the

pace of our actions and encourage a global partnership against human trafficking.

What can we do? We can strengthen Libyan law enforcement capacities to investigate and prosecute the criminals, and align national laws to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime; its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. We can build partnerships among States of the region against this crime, and improve the capacity of the law enforcement authorities of Libya and other countries to investigate the finances flowing from these crimes. UNODC, as part of a complete response, is prepared to engage with the Libyan Government.

In more general terms, the widespread and systematic violations of people's fundamental rights in mass movements continue to be a cause for grave concern. As the Secretary-General mentioned, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other terrorist groups are exploiting young boys and girls as sexual slaves or soldiers.

Thanks to the Security Council's efforts and the United Nations system's work, including the General Assembly's recent review of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, there is forward momentum against this crime. The international community's resolve needs to be translated into action across all regional processes and initiatives. Such efforts are firmly rooted in international law. The Palermo Convention and its Protocols provide that solid legal foundation. I encourage parties to those treaties to strengthen international cooperation, develop comprehensive legislation and ensure that no offender escapes justice. Early-warning and early-screening initiatives must be used proactively, while offering victims, especially women and children, protection and affording them the assistance to which they are entitled.

UNODC's response to resolution 2331 (2016) has been extensive, including help to disrupt and dismantle networks and tackle connected crimes, such as money-laundering and corruption. We have designed tools for United Nations bodies in conflict situations, enhanced data-collection processes, engaged in developing training of police officers seconded to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, assisted victims under the umbrella of the Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking and helped States to implement the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, among many other actions. I welcome the recent contributions of Italy and other States to the Trust Fund and call on everyone to follow their example.

Greater coordination is needed among the United Nations family, and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) can help achieve that goal, as recently acknowledged by the General Assembly. To give new impetus to the joint work and efforts of ICAT partner members, UNODC is considering convening a meeting at the principals' level in 2018.

UNODC stands ready to provide further briefings to the Security Council on the implementation of the draft resolution to be adopted later today, as well as to work closely with it to end this heinous crime.

The President: I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Giammarinaro.

Ms. Giammarinaro: It is a privilege for me to have this opportunity to participate in this open debate of the Security Council under the Italian presidency. The Security Council has been actively committed to this topic since the presidential statement adopted in December 2015 (S/PRST/2015/25), and subsequently through the annual reports of the Secretary-General and the Council's resolutions.

In fulfilment of my mandate, I have reported twice on this subject to the General Assembly and to the Human Rights Council, and recently submitted a joint report with the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, focused on children's vulnerabilities deriving from conflict. I am convinced that trafficking in persons in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations, trafficking in persons fleeing conflict, and the protection of the rights of victims and potential victims require urgent, concerted and effective action.

The shocking video broadcast a few days ago by CNN showing an auction of young migrants, publicized as slave workforce sold for a few dollars, shows that trafficking for the purpose of exploitation and slavery is a tragic reality nowadays. I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his strong and inspiring words on the subject.

Research carried out by United Nations agencies — including the United Nations Office on

Drugs and Crime, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — as well as by non-governmental organizations, such as Caritas Internationalis, among others, confirms that this human rights violation is a systematic component of conflict that, in certain circumstances, amounts to war crimes or crimes against humanity. Trafficking is always fuelled by political instability, and happens on a regular basis in the context of large migration flows. Moreover, as a form of gender-based violence, it disproportionally affects women and girls, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and children and young adults on a massive scale.

Egregious patterns of trafficking, forced labour and slavery have been found to be a strategy of terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh, Boko Haram and others. Furthermore, such gross human rights violations are systematically perpetrated in the context of every conflict, or in areas at risk of conflict, by criminal or armed groups that take advantage of the breakdown of the rule of law to carry out the dirty business of trafficking in persons and to become more powerful and dangerous. That is one of the reasons that the prevention of trafficking for any purpose is directly linked with the maintenance of international peace and security.

In that light, a human rights perspective is crucial. Human rights violations such as trafficking in persons are not only a consequence but also a cause of conflict, when they reach a massive dimension and amount to gross human rights violations and serious crimes perpetrated by criminal or armed groups, including in the context of migration, and especially in transit countries. Therefore, the Security Council agenda on trafficking should be linked with the process leading to a global compact on migration and refugees, as well as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Moreover, trafficking should be addressed in connection with the women and peace and security agenda and with that on the six grave violations against children during armed conflict.

A particular concern relates to the situation of children who are used as child soldiers or sexual slaves during conflict and are disproportionally affected by displacement, often travelling alone to reach a safe country and being subject to every form of trafficking, exploitation and abuse. It is an obligation under international law to protect them at all times. In that context, States should ban the detention of children for violations of immigration laws and regulations.

States are required by international law to take effective measures to ensure that victims of trafficking are protected from further exploitation and harm, including during conflict and humanitarian crises. They also bear an obligation to prevent the violation of, and respect and fulfil, the human rights of victims of trafficking, including by exercising their due diligence in holding non-State actors, including armed groups and criminal groups, accountable at all times. Moreover, an innovative approach is needed, based on the good practices of some United Nations agencies, regarding early screening and identification — not only of victims of trafficking but of people vulnerable to it among displaced populations, asylum seekers and, in general terms, people fleeing conflict — aimed at adopting tailored solutions to protect vulnerable people from trafficking and exploitation. I am confident that such an approach will be reflected in the new draft resolution to be adopted later today.

Preventing and combating human trafficking cannot be achieved by one State alone. The lack of international cooperation is often a source of further human rights violations, especially in the context of migration. I would like to recall here the many who lost their lives in an attempt to reach safe shores, in Europe and elsewhere, and the many who survived their perilous journeys to end up in situations of trafficking for forced labour or slavery. States must respond quickly and effectively and adopt a shared responsibility approach in order to incorporate anti-trafficking in all humanitarian interventions in conflict zones as a lifesaving activity, to establish wider channels for regular migration, to ensure full respect of the principle of non-refoulement, to implement relocations in a preferred country, family reunification procedures and effective child protection systems, as powerful means to prevent trafficking and, simultaneously, to ensure stability, peace and security.

The President: I thank Ms. Giammarinaro for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Chergui.

Mr. Chergui: On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I would like to thank the Italian presidency of the Security Council for convening this important meeting under the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security:

trafficking in persons in conflict situations". I will focus my presentation on the situation in Africa.

The African Union Peace and Security Council is currently seized with 15 conflict situations on the continent, including countries engaged in war or experiencing post-conflict tensions, while a dozen face chronic vulnerabilities. In each of those situations, trafficking remains an issue that continues to erode the human dignity of individuals, in particular women and children. The stories we hear from the victims in countries such as Libya, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Somalia, to name a few, are harrowing. The Government of Burundi has recorded more than 356 women and girls who have been victims of human trafficking since January. The tragedy is that once they reach their destination, human rights abuse continues, sometimes under the radar. Although the phenomenon exists everywhere, the populations in conflict situations are more vulnerable to sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, forced child labour and the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers. According to the report just released by the International Labour Organization, Africa has the highest rate of modern slavery, with 7.6 per cent per 1,000 people.

Allow me to touch on the plight of migrants in Libya. The African Union learned with dismay of reports of the auctioning of African migrants in Libya as slaves. We were lost for words when we saw those images. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, has strongly condemned such despicable acts, which are at odds with the ideas of the founding fathers of our Organization and the relevant African and international instruments, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. In addition, the African Union is deeply concerned about the inhuman conditions across Libya where migrants are being held. The business of smuggling migrants has become so lucrative that it has led to clashes among rebel factions, who are, in essence, rent-seekers promising partners that they can contain the issue of migrants in Libya.

The African Union has requested the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to launch an urgent investigation in support of the measures announced by the Libyan authorities and to submit its conclusions as soon as possible. The African Union also intends to dispatch an envoy to Libya for consultation with the Government and other stakeholders in order to agree on practical steps to address the plight of African migrants in Libya.

The African Union believes that ending the trafficking in persons in conflict situations must start with the resolution of conflict. We are working relentlessly to prevent and mediate conflicts, and to address their root causes. Indeed, building on the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, the United Nations and the African Union are currently in the process of developing and a United Nations-African Union framework for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The African Union also maintains that a multi-pronged but tailored and context-specific approach that addresses the complexities and nuances of the problem is the only way to make concrete and sustainable progress. The African Union therefore focuses on both prevention and response. The preventive approach focuses on addressing the conditions that lead to human trafficking. Interventions should be tailored to address particular vulnerabilities and provide meaningful and effective alternatives for livelihoods and political participation. The African Union Commission is undertaking various initiatives aimed at addressing the structural vulnerabilities of member States, through the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework.

The Commission is also supporting member States in strengthening their national peace infrastructure to enable them to respond to local realities and potential threats. Within the framework of the African Union Border Programme, the African Union's work with development partners has helped some of its members in the Sahel and East Africa to enhance Government presence in the border region by extending public and social services. The African Union has also adopted several legal and normative instruments that are designed to tackle the trafficking of human beings and the smuggling of migrants. Those instruments have provided the basis for member States to enact anti-trafficking legislation, which has protected and rescued a great number of victims.

The second component focuses on strengthening security response measures. Significant progress has already been made through peace support operations and ad hoc security arrangements. However, there are considerable gaps in the criminal justice response to

human trafficking, which include outdated legislation and weak institutional capacities to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate human trafficking cases. The Nouakchott and Djibouti processes on the enhancement of security cooperation in the Sahel and East Africa, established under the auspices of the African Union, have served as the catalysts for robust cooperation between the intelligence services of the countries of the respective regions. Those processes have allowed different institutions to develop and share their understanding of common security threats, and devise collaborative response measures to address them.

The African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) is now fully operational. AFRIPOL was established to enhance cooperation and coordination between police and other law enforcement agencies of member States at the strategic, operational and tactical levels to coherently and effectively combat all forms of crime. AFRIPOL will also play a critical role in training and building the capacity of law enforcement agencies to confront the range of emerging transnational threats, including human trafficking. We are also working on a framework that will provide comprehensive victim-support services for those affected by human trafficking. That includes health services addressing the long-term needs of those who have been physically injured, and psychological support for the victims and their families. That is in line with the three approaches of preventing the crime, prosecuting traffickers and protecting the victims.

Each of our initiatives to combat human trafficking is founded on the realization that the challenges of human trafficking must be addressed from both regional and global perspectives and be situated within the context of sustainable development. Unfortunately our efforts to prevent, protect and assist the victims of human trafficking continue to be hindered by the following challenges.

First, although we have a shared analysis of the mini conflict situations on the continent, we do not always have a common strategy. Take Libya, for example. We all remember the pre-intervention period in the country. The African Union wanted the mediated solution but it was prevented. Even today, the repercussions of the current situation in Libya or in neighbouring African countries are not fully appreciated. We were not heard before and we continue not to be heard, but we are hopeful that that will change.

Secondly, we must address Government deficits and the lack of social a economic development on the continent, which have led our youth to risk their lives across the Sahara and Mediterranean Sea in search of a better tomorrow or to become involved with terrorist groups that can provide income and a sense of belonging. Let us make sure that this time we move from words to action, and ensure that we meet the goal set for 2030.

Thirdly, there is a lack of cooperation among the various actors involved in addressing the issue of human trafficking. It is therefore very important for our two organizations to hold regular consultations at the highest leadership level.

Fourthly, there is an urgency gap, related to the low level of importance accorded to human trafficking. More must be done to mobilize international, regional and national actors to bring the issue to the top of our agendas.

Finally, there is a policy-implementation gap, where policies at the national, regional, continental and global level are not implemented. Let me again touch on the situation in Libya. The slavery camps must be dismantled without delay, the criminal networks destroyed immediately and those behind the atrocious crimes brought to justice. It is also our expectation that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees will establish a permanent presence in Libya to assist the victims of trafficking. We are no longer in a situation of failing to provide assistance to persons in danger but are condemning those young men and women to death if we fail to act.

In conclusion, let me say that our common humanity is at stake. The expectation that we shall address the scourge of human trafficking is immense, and time is not on our side. We owe it to the victims of this tragedy who have suffered for far too long.

The President: I thank Mr. Chergui for his briefing.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/973, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Belize, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Poland,

Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2388 (2017).

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We thank the Italian presidency for organizing this very timely and important debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We thank the Secretary-General; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Ambassador Chergui, for their briefings on the theme of our debate today. I wish in particular to express my appreciation for the frankness with which Ambassador Chergui delivered his briefing and spoke on this critical matter.

Armed conflicts, poverty, inequality and the impact of climate change, among other protection challenges, increase the vulnerability of migrants and forcibly displaced persons to falling victim to trafficking in persons. Migrants continue to face unimaginable and often fatal dangers along their journey at the hands of traffickers, as opportunities for embarking upon a legal path are very limited, thereby increasing the human cost. That is particularly alarming in countries affected by armed conflict, where armed transnational organized criminal groups and terrorists have the space to engage in trafficking in persons, as clearly indicated in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939).

Many migrants from Africa, including women and children, who are fleeing persecution and/or searching for a better life in Europe and the Middle East are falling victim to those terrorists and criminals. In that regard, we note with concern reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and inhumane acts associated with trafficking in persons, particularly reports of sexual exploitation and abuse, forced marriage and the offering of women and children as rewards to fighters and associates. The gruesome stories of the victims, their trauma, torture and death at the hands of those terrorists and criminals are a stark reminder for us of the need to address that challenge individually and collectively.

What we saw on the news only few days ago concerning African migrants in Libya, who were reportedly being sold as slaves, has certainly drawn international attention to the challenge of human trafficking. Let me say here that it is not the amount of money involved in purchasing humans that should be the centre of focus, but the very idea. It is against that backdrop that we are holding this meeting, and we strongly condemn such inhuman and despicable acts, which, as many have said, should have no place in our world today.

We fully support the statement issued by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General on the matter calling, for swift action to identify the perpetrators of that crime and with a view to bringing them to justice. However, we know full well that condemning such acts and calling for an investigation of the crimes committed will not take us very far in addressing the issue of human trafficking. We need to have a very serious and honest conversation about trafficking and tackling the root causes in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Accordingly, two very weighty issues would need to be considered in connection with the painful reality of humans being sold as slaves in Libya.

The first issue involves the actual situations that migrants are running away from. At the root of that are poverty and hopelessness. Such situations should remind us of the extent to which there is virtually no alternative to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Secondly, there is an urgent need to sort out the political situation in Libya so that the rule of law will prevail throughout the country under an authority whose legitimacy is recognized by the Libyan people. In the

meantime, the role of the Security Council is becoming much more relevant and significant, and we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2388 (2017). We hope that it will contribute to enhancing the Council's engagement in addressing human trafficking, which has emerged as a very serious challenge to international peace and security. We also appreciate Italy's important role in addressing this particular issue and its efforts in facilitating negotiations on resolution 2388 (2017).

In terms of an effective international response to the scourge of trafficking in persons, attention should be paid to reducing the vulnerability of migrants and refugees, particularly women and children, including unaccompanied and separated children, as they are at the highest risk of falling victim to human trafficking. Recent reports clearly indicate that tighter immigration controls and border security measures, as well as limited humanitarian assistance, increase the vulnerability of migrants and refugees to becoming victims of human trafficking. As such, much more needs to be done by countries of transit and destination in expanding legal channels for migration or for the resettlement of refugees, as that would decrease the number of potential victims of trafficking undertaking a fatal or dangerous journey in a manner consistent with international humanitarian and human rights standards.

Recognizing the positive contribution of migration to the global economy and sustainable development is absolutely imperative. That requires developing an agenda aimed at fostering fair migration that not only respects the fundamental rights of migrants, but also offers them real opportunities for decent work and integration into the society in which they find themselves. In that regard, countries of origin, transit and destination might consider creating a framework for well-regulated, regular and fair migration, while at the same time prioritizing the human rights of migrants.

While searching for solutions and mechanisms to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, maintaining the capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies in countries affected by conflict remains central. Lifesaving humanitarian assistance and international protection of refugees and migrants, regardless of their status, should continue to form the cornerstone of humanitarian response, including in mixed flows. The adoption of an open-door policy for people seeking humanitarian assistance, regardless of their status — particularly in the context of search, rescue and disembarkation of people on mixed movement — should continue to be encouraged.

Ethiopia, for its part, has been trying to take various measures to prevent and fight trafficking in persons, including the ratification of relevant legal framework such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Aside from what each of us can and must do at the national level, however, there is certainly a need to enhance bilateral and multilateral cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination regarding the identification, assistance, protection, repatriation and reintegration of victims of human trafficking.

In our view, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and regional frameworks such as the Khartoum process could provide a framework for such cooperation and coordination.

In conclusion, discussions on the global compacts on migration and refugees should be informed by practical steps taken to address trafficking in persons, and we hope that the discussions we are having today will contribute to that objective.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. Let me also thank the Secretary-General, Executive Director Fedotov and Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro for their useful briefings. I also welcome the statement made by Mr. Chergui.

I would like to align myself with the statement to be made later on behalf of the European Union and the statement by Norway on behalf of the Nordic Countries.

Trafficking in persons is a trade in human misery. It is the lowest form of criminality, where illicit conglomerates prey on those who lack protection or whose desperate hopes for a better life leave them open and vulnerable to abduction, exploitation and abuse. Just yesterday we heard the bone-chilling reports from Libya of outright slave trade taking place there. I echo the Secretary-General's and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's remarks on those appalling acts as some of the most outrageous abuses of human

rights, and call upon the competent authorities to investigate these activities without delay. Slavery has no place in our world and we must work ceaselessly to end such practices.

As we discussed on Friday during our meeting on security challenges in the Mediterranean region (see S/PV.8106), there is a complex set of interlinkages between conflict and instability, human rights violations and abuses, serious crimes, terrorism, displacement and trafficking in persons. Conflicts and humanitarian crises amplify the risk of trafficking in persons, and there is a link between trafficking and large movements of migrants and refugees. This leaves displaced persons, migrants and women and children particularly at risk. This phenomenon is replicated in conflicts all over the world, including — as we have discussed recently in the Council — in Iraq, Syria and the Sahel.

Since trafficking in persons essentially entails violations and abuses of human rights, the prevalence and impunity of such criminality in turn undermines the rule of law and can lead to the perpetuation of other forms of serious crimes. Our resolutions on trafficking, including the resolution 2388 (2017), which we have just adopted, clearly acknowledge the link between trafficking in persons and sexual violence and exploitation. That is evidenced by the grotesque crimes committed against women in conflicts. We have heard ourselves, first hand, from the Yazidi survivor, Nadia Murad Basee Taha, in December 2015 (see S/PV.7585). Another example is the reports of violations and sexual abuses against children in Myanmar and of their trafficking for sexual purposes in Bangladesh as a result of the mass displacement of persons along these countries' borders. Children are often the primary victims of trafficking, with lifelong consequences.

We must ensure that we can identify and provide proper aid and support to the victims of trafficking. To effectively combat trafficking of persons, especially in conflict situations, it is imperative that we secure the evidence so that perpetrators can be brought to justice. Let me make four points on how we can tackle this horrifying crime.

First, the United Nations presence in conflict situations can play an important role in response to trafficking in persons through support for capacity-building and reform efforts in national institutions, and by enhancing national authorities' ability to fight and ultimately prevent serious crimes. United Nations missions also have a role in the protection of civilians, including those at risk of being trafficked. At the global level, the Council can play its role by including relevant criteria for the listing of traffickers and their supporters in sanctions resolutions. The newly established sanctions regime for Mali, which also targets organized criminals that obstruct the implementation of the peace agreement, is an example of this.

Secondly, building strong rule-of-law institutions is essential. This includes improving our capacity to secure evidence in conflict situations. In that regard, we look forward to the work of the team being established to secure evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh in Iraq. Cooperation between global and regional organizations such as INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and between national law-enforcement agencies, is also essential. The work of the UNODC on trafficking in persons, which is enhancing our knowledge and understanding of this topic, is particularly welcome. In addition, international legal assistance arrangements can play an important role as an essential tool to fight transnational crime. Additionally, a robust international legal regime on trafficking in persons should provide a framework for all of our work.

Thirdly, we must remember that trafficking is, in essence, a criminal, albeit cynical, business model, capitalizing on the vulnerabilities of persons. Therefore, we must hit traffickers where it hurts them most, by going after their assets, which also help finance both organized crime groups and terrorist groups.

Finally, traffickers are enabled by instability, poverty and inequality. By creating peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies, the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be a powerful tool. By working to combat these crimes, we are also contributing to building and sustaining peace in societies.

Human trafficking, by its nature, is a crime that exists below the radar for the vast majority of people. Those who are trafficked are a hidden population, kept in the shadows where the unspeakable crimes committed against them remain unseen. However, we cannot allow the suffering and violations of human dignity to go unheeded and unpunished. We must shine a light into the darkness, we must name and shame these criminals and work together to bring an end to this despicable enterprise.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): We commend the Italian delegation for convening this debate and keeping the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict situations on the Council's agenda. The briefers have set the right tone for the debate. Trafficking in persons is a curse and disgrace of our times. It is a gross violation of human rights and an extremely complex form of organized crime.

In recent years, we have observed a significant evolution of its forms, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. Numerous ongoing conflicts have led to a rise in exploitation of civilians. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, the Lord's Resistance Army and other terrorist and armed groups engage in human trafficking, forcing victims into sexual slavery, sexual exploitation and compulsory labour. Trafficking is therefore a transnational threat that requires a transnational response, including from the Security Council. In that regard, it is encouraging that the Council has addressed the issue in two recent resolutions, 2331 (2016), adopted last year, and 2388 (2017), which we have just adopted today. Ukraine also fully supports the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in September as resolution 72/1. We must build on that momentum.

People who have been trafficked should be treated as victims of a crime and not penalized for their forced involvement in the unlawful activities of the perpetrators. Along with the provision of psychological, social and medical support to victims, we see the fight against impunity as one of the key priorities in this area. For traffickers, human beings are merely a commodity to be sold for profit. The channels they use for trafficking humans can also be used for smuggling arms or transporting terrorists, if there is a greater profit to be made. Terrorist organizations often engage in such activities in order to finance themselves, and the international community should therefore consolidate its efforts to block those channels, treating them as a major threat to international security.

Ukraine is not immune to the problem of trafficking in persons, but our Government is taking firm steps to address the issue and has put the fight against this horrendous problem at the top of its agenda. In the past decade, Ukraine has made significant progress towards establishing a viable nationwide counter-trafficking response framework, and has set up a national referral mechanism for identifying, assisting and protecting victims of trafficking. We have enacted a law combating trafficking in human beings in Ukraine.

Our approach therefore places victims and their human rights at the centre of our actions. We are working to eradicate trafficking in human beings, taking into account the gender aspects of the issue and the best interests of children. In that regard, our priorities are, first, identifying, protecting and assisting victims of trafficking; stepping up our efforts to prevent trafficking in human beings; increasing the prosecution of traffickers; enhancing coodination and cooperation among key actors and institutions; and increasing our knowledge of emerging concerns related to all forms of trafficking in human beings and improving the effectiveness of our response to them.

Ukraine has acceded to the main international legal instruments related to the fight against human trafficking and, as I have already mentioned, has a solid national legal framework for dealing with this shocking phenomenon. I should note, however, that at the moment not all of those instruments can be properly implemented in the areas of my country that are not under the Government's control. According to current international data, the Russian aggression in Ukraine has displaced 2 million people, who constitute a population that is especially vulnerable to exploitation. In the areas controlled by Russia and its proxies in the Donbas region, the situation has become particularly challenging. Displaced persons are often victims of trafficking, and some Ukrainians have been subjected to forced labor in the occupied territory, often under torture. Their cases remain largely unaddressed, however, owing to a lack both of safe access for and proper attention from monitoring missions, especially the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, as well as UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross. In that regard, I should single out another issue of great importance for Ukraine, which is ensuring that the perpetrators of trafficking in persons are rendered accountable and that they are prosecuted. The high level of impunity for such crimes in the areas that the Government does not control is unacceptable.

Trafficking in persons is a blatant violation of human rights and an offence against human beings' dignity and integrity. For our common fight against this scourge to succeed, it requires the efforts of all concerned. A long-term solution will come about only

through the international community's consistent political commitment and joint action in eradicating this evil, promoting justice and accountability and protecting the victims.

I would like to thank the President once again for convening today's important meeting.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Since it so happens that today we have been given the floor immediately after the Ukrainian delegation, we would like to begin by once again repudiating the insinuations made about Russia as inappropriate, unfounded and perhaps even absurd. And now let me turn to the topic of today's meeting.

We would first like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union for their substantive presentations and assessments of the threat of human trafficking in situations of conflict.

The topic of today's meeting is not a new one for the Council, which has dedicated resolution 2331 (2016) and presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25, adopted in December 2015, to it. The problems treated in those documents remain urgent. Considering the transnational nature of crimes related to the trafficking of persons in conflict situations, international cooperation in combating them is becoming more and more essential. Such cooperation should be based on recognizing the interrelationship between trafficking in persons and the persistent imbalances between the socioeconomic development of various States and regions, the increasing illegal migration flows around the world and the activities of international organized criminal associations. The best way to effectively combat human trafficking is by taking an integrated approach to the problem that includes prevention, the criminal prosecution of perpetrators and assistance to their victims.

The issue of human trafficking's links to terrorism and its financing is a specific and separate problem. We urge everyone to work more actively to fight this nexus, including by strengthen cooperation in exposing and prosecuting those involved. It is important to use all the available tools in order to suppress such activity, and we support strengthening the mechanisms for combating trafficking in human beings through various United Nations platforms as well as other global and regional formats. Our country is a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children and a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

We consider the leading role of the United Nations in consolidating international and national bodies' efforts to combat trafficking in human beings very important, and we welcome the measures taken in this direction through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, especially for giving specialized assistance to interested States. We believe that such work deserves support, and we plan to continue to contribute to it. We firmly believe in the importance of further developing the capacity of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and its member organizations' active participation in implementing the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. We consider it a key reference point for directing States' efforts in this area.

In that regard, we welcomed the General Assembly's adoption in September of resolution 72/1, on the political declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action. We believe that the approaches that have been agreed on in the United Nations to combating trafficking in human beings constitute a solid basis for cooperation on the issue. We should therefore adopt a cautious attitude to attempts to modify or formulate alternative platforms in this area, so as to avoid misunderstanding or weakening the international anti-trafficking regime.

In conclusion, we would once again like to emphasize that in order to avoid duplicating efforts in combating human trafficking it is crucial to strictly follow the terms of reference established by United Nations bodies. In that way, it is appropriate for the Security Council to consider issues of human trafficking only in relation to the issues on its agenda. As we understand it, one can address that issue in the context of specific conflict situations, each of which has its own particular features, and of efforts to curtial the financing of terrorism.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to warmly thank Italy for having convened today's debate on an extremely topical issue that touches all of our consciences. We also congratulate you, Mr. President, on your tireless efforts

that allowed us to unanimously adopt resolution 2388 (2017). France also thanks the Secretary-General for his exemplary leadership on this issue, and Ms. Giammarinaro, Mr. Fedotov and Mr. Chergui for their informative briefings.

France aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I shall focus my statement on three points.

First, with respect to an analysis of the situation, trafficking in human beings remains one of the most profitable and widespread activities in the world. It assumes numerous forms of exploitation: forced labour, sexual servitude, kidnapping for forced prostitution and rape, to give but a few examples. Tragically, recourse to such atrocities, which are abominable and dehumanizing by their very nature, is no longer the exception to the rule in conflict and post-conflict situations. Armed groups, be they terrorists and criminals, use human trafficking not only as a means of sewing terror among civilian populations, but also as a source of financing and even as a recruitment tool.

We must make the chilling observation that trafficking has become a key and a nefarious component of many conflict situations. In Iraq and Syria, it is women and children who have suffered and continue to suffer the worst atrocities committed by Da'esh. In West Africa, and more particularly in Nigeria, Boko Haram tortures, rapes and holds hundreds of women and children captive. In Libya, migrants are subjected to inhuman treatment and violence by criminal groups and militias who see them as nothing but a source of income.

The second point that I want to emphasize concerns the obligation to act collectively in the face of acts that are not only morally intolerable, but also constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity and even crimes of genocide. Their perpetrators must be brought to justice for their actions. Thus, in the case of Libya, France welcomes the activities of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in pursuing her investigation into the alleged crimes against migrants transiting through Libya. Faced of such crimes, we have a duty to act to protect not only civilians, but also international humanitarian law and our principles. We must also work tirelessly to settle by political means conflicts that cause people to flee and suffer.

In view of our determined commitment to multilateralism on this issue, France is also heavily involved at the national level in the fight against trafficking in persons, especially women and children. France has a highly developed legal arsenal and a national action plan to counter that scourge. We encourage all States to equip themselves with robust national arrangements in the framework established by the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

France is involved in many bilateral and regional cooperation efforts to assist the most vulnerable States to address this scourge. We participate actively in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime capacity-building programmes, particularly in West Africa, and contributes to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, since it was established in 2010.

The third element that I shall highlight, as have previous speakers, is the fact that our common fight against trafficking in human beings requires the commitment of all States and heightened international cooperation. States we must forge a global response based on respect for human rights and oriented on three main objectives: prevention, protection and punishment. The Security Council has a special responsibility in the fight against this scourge in conflict situations. Today, we cannot deny that trafficking in persons by armed or terrorist groups in conflict or post-conflict situations constitutes a threat to international peace and security.

Following the adoption in December 2015 of presidential statement S/PRST/2015/25 and in December 2016 of resolution 2331 (2016), resolution 2388 (2017), which we have adopted today, is a new step forward in our common fight against trafficking in and exploitation of human beings. It will, inter alia, strengthen the action of States, with the support of the United Nations, in two main areas: first, the identification of victims and vulnerable persons, with special attention to women and children; and secondly, the ability to dismantle networks, in particular criminal and terrorist networks, that deal in trafficking.

In the face of such horrendous crimes, we have a collective responsibility to stop them and to prosecute those responsible for such acts. The Security Council

may rest assured of the full commitment of France to that fight.

Mrs. Hailey (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, and Italy for your leadership on this matter. We also thank all the briefers for their very informative reports.

We want to extend a special thanks to the Secretary-General for his strong condemnation of reports of African migrants being sold as slaves in Libya. To see the pictures of those men being treated like cattle and to hear the auctioneer describe them as "big strong boys for farm work" should shock the conscience of us all. There are few greater violations of human rights and human dignity than that. There is no place in our world for slavery. The United States urges a full investigation of those appalling acts. The perpetrators who are responsible for those crimes must be held accountable. That is literally why we are here today — to put a stop to that barbaric practice and other acts of exploitation of human beings.

Human trafficking is of concern to the United States because of its destructive impact on individuals. But it also has consequences beyond its immediate victims. The United States was the first country to bring human trafficking in conflict to the Council's agenda as an international peace and security issue in 2015. More recently, we have advocated treating far more human rights abuses and violations as peace and security issues.

Human trafficking in conflict is a prime example of the kind of human rights abuses that threaten entire regions and the world. Terrorist groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) use human trafficking to support their aggression, fuelling a cycle of violence that leads to more vulnerable, displaced people who are then exploited by traffickers.

A young boy named Abdul was kidnapped by Boko Haram from his village in Nigeria when he was just 14 years old. The terrorists trained him in the use of heavy weapons and forced him to carry out operations in which he killed 14 civilians. He was also forced to gather intelligence on Government forces for Boko Haram. As far as we have seen, far too often kidnapped girls and women play a different but no less horrific role for those terrorist groups. Amal was captured by ISIS in Libya, along with a group of 71 other migrants. She testified that her captors separated the men from the women and the Christians from the Muslims. She was forced into sexual slavery and kept underground. She did not see the sun for nine months.

Those are just two examples among many. Across sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, vast human displacement due to ongoing conflicts and dire economic need has resulted in rampant human trafficking. Violence on the part of State and non-State actors alike has driven thousands across the region to Europe in search of a better life, exposing already vulnerable populations to human traffickers. The children who are forced into those situations live in conditions that most of us are blessed not to be able to imagine. For those who have escaped traffickers, the nightmare is not over. Their trauma continues long after the victimization ends. Many will never fully recover.

The United States continues to combat trafficking in persons by focusing our efforts on prevention, protection and prosecution.

On prevention, we fund research to better understand the connection between conflict and vulnerability to human trafficking, especially in places most affected by the outflow of refugees from the Syrian civil war. We also support the International Organization for Migration's efforts to increase screening, victim identification and services among vulnerable populations.

On protection, the United States stresses the critical need to immediately identify trafficking victims in conflict situations, and to see that they are provided with the necessary protection and assistance. As noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939), victims of trafficking by violent extremist groups, such as ISIS and the Taliban, suffer from particularly severe trauma. Not only is the United States fully committed to the complete defeat of those violent extremist groups, but we join the Council in our complete commitment to helping those victims.

On prosecution, we appreciate the Council's focus on accountability for human trafficking. In addition to the impressive efforts of our colleagues at the Department of Justice to bring perpetrators to justice, we have elevated our diplomatic engagement on that effort by highlighting prosecution throughout the Department of State's 2017 *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

We believe that a victim-centred approach to the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking is critical to the overall success of law enforcement efforts.

That includes commitments by States not to prosecute trafficking victims for acts committed as a direct result of being subjected to human trafficking. We are also committed to partnering with Governments in order to enhance their capacity to document human trafficking cases. We welcome the Council's unanimous call for an investigative mechanism in Iraq to document ISIS' crimes, including its heinous practice of forcing women into sexual slavery.

Finally, we are encouraged by the Secretary-General's focus on improved United Nations coordination on trafficking of persons in conflict, as expressed in his report. As armed conflicts and trafficking in persons continue to converge and contribute to global peace and security challenges, the United Nations must also improve coordination to address that challenge. We join the Secretary-General's call on remaining Member States to become party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. That would be an important show of the unified, international front against human trafficking. We will continue to work with the Council and partner Governments to end that barbaric assault on human dignity.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia wishes to thank the Italian presidency not only for the initiative to convene this debate, but also for its leadership in the negotiations on resolution 2388 (2017) and for all of its work on the topic that brings us together today. We also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and for his work on and commitment to this common struggle. We further thank Mr. Fedotov, Ms. Giammarinaro and Mr. Chergui for their briefings.

In recent days, the International Organization for Migration has denounced the existence of a slave market in Libya. We have all seen the horrible and heartbreaking images of individuals being auctioned in that country. Bolivia echoes the words of the Secretary-General in condemning those facts in the strongest terms, and supports the request of the African Union for the urgent conduct an investigation into those despicable acts and inhumane practices in order to identify those responsible and bring them to justice.

The international community must be made aware that we are at a critical juncture in history. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, we are facing the greatest humanitarian crisis since the creation of the United Nations. That is reflected by the 66 million people who, by late 2016, had been forcibly displaced throughout the world as a result of war, persecution, armed conflicts and violence, representing the largest movement of people since the end of the Second World War. Among those individuals were children, women and men — all easily exploited by traffickers.

As underscored in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, armed groups also participate in trafficking in persons in the territories in which they operate. They recruit and use thousands of children as combatants in various conflicts. They also traffic women and girls to force them into marriage or subject them to sexual slavery, and exploit men and boys with forced labour. According to that report, 79 per cent of the victims of trafficking in persons are women and children, two of every three victims are girls under 12, and one of every three victims is a girl between the ages of 15 and 18. At the same time, according to the International Labour Organization, more than 12 million people suffer from situations similar to slavery as a result of trafficking in persons.

We urge all States to address this issue through cooperation and international, regional and bilateral dialogue, and to work to strengthen effective measures to combat and eliminate trafficking in persons, assist victims and survivors in their reintegration, and bring the perpetrators to justice. Likewise, we underscore the importance of implementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and we call on States that have not yet done so to ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

It is clear that conflicts weaken State structures, impair protection mechanisms and allow criminal networks to act with greater freedom. It is therefore necessary to fight against economic asymmetries and address the structural causes of poverty, one consequence of which is the large migratory flows that are caused mainly by the concentration of wealth in certain countries — the root cause of which is the current economic and financial system.

That situation is exacerbated by policies of regime change, interventionism and interference in the internal

affairs of other States. A clear example of that is the crisis in the Sahel region, which is due, inter alia, to the associated impact of the crisis in Libya, as reflected in the transfer of arms and combatants to Mali, which considerably strengthened the military capacity of the terrorist groups that operate in the subregion.

Unfortunately, terrorism has capitalized on those economic asymmetries and armed conflicts, creating a growing link between terrorism and trafficking in persons. International criminal groups and terrorist groups, which the Council and all Member States fight, profit from trafficking in persons and their exploitation, and use the economic gains to finance their terrorist activities.

By closing off borders, building walls, criminalizing migration and denying access to refugees, we believe that some countries not only negatively impact trafficking in persons, but also give rise to xenophobia, discrimination and racism, and serve to fuel the rhetoric of the terrorist groups that we are all trying to combat. Such rhetoric, of course, includes intolerance of different religious beliefs. Similarly, it is important that the international community continue to investigate how the economic profits from trafficking in persons are injected into the global financial system through money-laundering and so-called tax havens.

We note that, since 2012, there has been comprehensive legislation in Bolivia against trafficking in persons, aimed at fighting the evil. In addition, the State is providing the resources necessary to ensuring that this fight is successful. Furthermore, in June the World People's Conference was held in Bolivia, under the theme "For a world without walls, towards universal citizenship", in order to promote the concept of universal citizenship with a view to reducing not only trafficking in persons but also the barriers that prevent refugees from fleeing war and armed conflicts.

We thank the Italian delegation once again for its leadership on this matter. We are sure that all that has been said in the Council and adopted in resolution 2388 (2017) will not remain empty words, but will become concrete action to eliminate this scourge.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation wishes to warmly thank the Italian delegation for its timely choice of this topic. Trafficking in persons in times of conflict goes hand in hand with the many briefings that the Italuian presidency has organized this month, including those on Libya and security challenges in the Mediterranean.

We would also like to thank today's briefers: Secretary-General António Guterres; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and of course our brother Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, who joined us from Addis Ababa.

This debate could not be more timely, given that indignation mixed with anger continues to envelop the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, following media reports on the auctioning off of individuals of sub-Saharan African origin in Libya. Certain questions continue to be posed. How long has this despicable practice been taking place? Who are the main players? What inhumane fate have those who were sold been subjected to? How can we put an end to this scourge, which surely constitutes a crime against humanity and a form of modern-day slavery? How can we find and bring to justice the backers, the perpetrators, the people smugglers and others who are complicit in this heinous trade?

In a press statement released last week, part of which I read out here in the Chamber on 17 November (see S/PV.8106), the Government of the Republic of Senegal appealed to the international community, specifically — but not limited to — the African Union and the United Nations, as well as the Libyan authorities, to swiftly launch an investigation in order to shed full light on the situation and identify the perpetrators, as well as to take all the necessary measures required to stop this crime and hold all those responsible to account.

What can the Security Council do? What must it do? The Secretary-General has provided us with an update on the current state of play in terms of States' implementation of the relevant provisions of resolution 2331 (2016). Resolution 2388 (2017), which we have just adopted this morning, equips us with the ways and means to tackle this scourge. In March, while reflecting on the same issue, we focused on forced labour, slavery and other abhorrent practices (see S/PV.7898). In September, the General Assembly endorsed the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, having assessed the actions

taken and remaining challenges in the fight against human trafficking in general.

For its part, Africa is highly mobilized, given that our continent is home to the greatest number of conflicts. My delegation would like to warmly thank Commissioner Mr. Chergui for his unequivocal briefing on the causes of this scourge as well as the ways and means to eliminate it. On the global level, however, no continent has been spared this scourge. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has shed further light on the complex links that exist between human trafficking and armed conflicts, revealing that 60 per cent of those who fall into the webs of human traffickers in situations of armed conflict are refugees and asylum seekers in flight.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to underscore its grave concern regarding human trafficking by non-State groups, especially terrorist groups, in situations of armed conflict. Their goal is to consolidate their power, strengthen their financial sources and, most unfortunately, recruit foreign terrorist fighters. Whether in Libya or anywhere else engulfed in conflict, my delegation considers it essential to be determined and coordinated in our fight against all forms of human trafficking. This crime not only constitutes a violation of human rights and international humanitarian law but also leads to further instability, allowing non-State armed groups, transnational organized crime and terrorism to thrive.

In adopting resolution 2331 (2016), the Security Council issued an urgent appeal to Member States to take immediate and decisive steps to prevent and crack down on human trafficking, particularly in situations of armed conflict. It calls upon States to investigate human trafficking networks active in armed conflict situations in order to disrupt and dismantle them. It also calls upon States to establish mechanisms to properly identify victims and alleged victims, including on the basis of information received from staff who are in contact with the former. Moreover, States should strengthen the bodies established to investigate illicit financial flows and analyse the extent to which human trafficking funds terrorism. States are also called upon to accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Senegal has ratified almost all international and regional conventions and protocols pertaining to human trafficking, and we have incorporated the provisions of those conventions and treaties in our national legislation. We have also drawn up regulatory and legislative texts at the national level that address the human trafficking and migrant phenomena, particularly through a specific law with a section in the criminal code on human trafficking and analogous practices that provides for the protection of victims, adopted in 2005.

In terms of measures to discourage, suppress and prevent human trafficking, particularly in armed conflict situations, my delegation would like to underscore the need to ensure accountability, while stressing the need to investigate alleged acts when reported and to identify and prosecute the alleged perpetrators. When national legal systems and courts are not in a position to conduct such investigations and prosecutions, then the international justice system must take on those cases in the fight against impunity.

It goes without saying that frank and exhaustive international and regional cooperation — within the context of a global and united approach — is essential here, particularly when it comes to information flow and the identification and protection of victims. Such cooperation must also translate into enhanced coordination between mechanisms and frameworks intended to prevent human trafficking and to protect people from human trafficking in conflict situations.

To conclude, my delegation would once again like to emphasize the importance of prevention, protection, rehabilitation and accountability as tools that we must utilize in our fight against all scourges that threaten humankind, including that of human trafficking in situations of armed conflict. To that end, it is important to combine prevention, response and reparation, while addressing the deep-rooted causes of conflict, strengthening the protection of civilians in such situations and bringing those who are responsible to justice.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): First of all, allow me to warmly thank Italy for convening this important meeting. My appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Special Rapporteur and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security for their informative briefings. This open debate provides a

precious opportunity to discuss how to effectively confront trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

Trafficking in persons poses a serious threat to human dignity and integrity. Resolution 2331 (2016), the first-ever resolution to highlight the nexus between trafficking in persons and armed conflict or terrorism, stressed that armed and terrorist groups are using trafficking in persons as a tactic for fundraising and recruitment.

Regrettably, despite the increasing awareness about this challenge facing the international community, there has not been sufficient improvement on the ground. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939) states that armed and terrorist groups continue to recruit boys and girls for combat or support functions and, in some instances, radicalize them to commit terrorist acts, using deception, threats and promises of reward.

Almost two years ago, in December 2015, the Security Council held its first thematic briefing on this subject (see S/PV.7585). Since then, it has continued to deal with it proactively in various aspects, such as sexual violence, exploitation and violence against children, among others. Japan welcomes today's adoption of resolution 2388 (2017), which demonstrates our strong will to take comprehensive and coordinated action to combat trafficking in persons. The resolution aims at promoting comprehensive methods to eliminate this crime. To effectively identify potential victims of trafficking, the resolution encourages Member States to use refugee registration mechanisms and early-warning and early-screening frameworks. Identifying victims is the first important step in protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators.

Japan fully echoes the emphasis on the importance to collect, analyse and share appropriate data among Member States and United Nations agencies, including the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. Accurate information is essential for their activities to be able to assess and respond to trafficking in persons in conflicts situations. In that regard, Japan appreciates the fact that the upcoming United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* includes a chapter dedicated to this aspect. I believe that such steps will enable the international community to move forward and strengthen its comprehensive approach.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939) and the relevant Security Council resolutions point out, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, are widely accepted legal instruments that enhance cooperation among Member States. Japan will fully engage in the global fight against this heinous crime as a State party through mechanisms established by those instruments.

Japan will continue to implement measures to prevent trafficking in persons, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators, in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the pertient Sustainable Development Goals, as well as in close cooperation with other Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and civil society.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): I thank the Italian presidency for convening this very important open debate in the Security Council and for initiating the adoption of today's resolution 2388 (2017) on this extremely vital issue. My delegation takes this opportunity to express its sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Guterres, Under-Secretary-General Fedotov, Mr. Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, as well as Ms. Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

Trafficking in persons in conflict situations remains an important matter for the international community. We therefore welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General's on this problem (S/2017/939), and urge that serious attention be paid to his recommendations. With the alarming proportions this problem has assumed, we need to take urgent measures such as harmonizing legislation across countries, enacting new stricter legislation, bringing perpetrators to justice, ending all impunity, exercising more vigilant cross-border controls and intelligence sharing. It is important to freeze and block assets, as well as work closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and INTERPOL and their regional affiliates. While conforming to regional and international norms, we need to offer protection and appropriate assistance to persons affected by this brutal crime.

We commend the tireless efforts and the application of best practices by the UNODC and other relevant United Nations system organizations in countering human trafficking. We also value the UNODC's able

coordination of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We support strengthened coordination between the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and Member States so as to enhance the effectiveness of our response to the current challenges of human trafficking, at the global, national and regional levels.

Comprehensive strict measures must be taken to ensure that trafficking in conflict situations does not lead to sexual slavery of women and girls, forced marriage or the most appalling human rights violations. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and other terrorist organizations are using trafficking and sexual violence as a weapon and tactic of terror, and we need to enhance our capabilities to fight them.

Human trafficking is one of the most shocking challenges facing the international community. It affects all regions of the world, without exception, since every country is, or could become, an origin, transit or destination country for victims of that threat. We must be quite vigilant in ensuring that refugees, displaced persons and immigrants — particularly women and girls — are not recruited for human trafficking in armed conflicts.

Combating trafficking in persons demands that we first look to the root causes, namely, poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment and the lack of socioeconomic opportunities and security, especially in conflict situations. We need to consider normative, financial and technological advantages to address this problem. It is also essential to mobilize funding for poverty eradication, education and employment in countries affected by conflict, by mobilizing international as well as the domestic resources of such States. Peace and development are a solid foundation for a stable society and the rule of law.

We see a need for strengthening cooperation between the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the African Union, the League of Arab State and other regional organizations that have done significant work in this area.

At the regional level, Kazakhstan effectively interacts with the Commonwealth of Independent States through its programme on cooperation against human trafficking for the period 2014-2018, and with the OSCE as part of its Alliance against Trafficking in Persons. We have also initiated the Almaty process, which serves as a platform for nine countries of the region to annually step up their response and enhance cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

It is important that our fight against this heinous crime be human-rights-centred. Kazakhstan is party to more than 60 multilateral treaties on human rights, including 13 directly related to counteracting contemporary forms of slavery. My country is committed to an integrated approach to address the scourge by taking full responsibility for implementation and fulfilling all obligations envisaged.

Kazakhstan has taken decisive measures, including legislative actions, to counteract various aspects of human trafficking. They include establishing a national referral mechanism, joining efforts to protect the rights of trafficked persons, introducing social standards to assist victims and regulating the procedures for identifying victims of human trafficking. Systematically, we carry out the Stop the Traffick preventive campaign. The relevant Government agencies regularly check the activities of modelling, tourism and marriage agencies that offer travel and employment services abroad, and monitor mass media and the Internet to detect materials related to trafficking in persons and child pornography.

We hope that today's dialogue will make a significant contribution in unifying the efforts made by States, international organizations and civil society, while helping to strengthen international activities, prosecute and punish criminals and protect victims of human trafficking. Kazakhstan, as a member of the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking, supports all international efforts to counteract this form of modern slavery, and calls on all States to fully and effectively implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Mr. Moustafa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your successful presidency of the Security Council for this month, during which you have offered valuable insights into the work of the Council — the most important being resolution 2388 (2017), adopted by the Security Council today, on the issue of trafficking in Persons in conflict situations. We would like to thank the

Secretary-General and all of today's briefers for their valuable contributions to today's debate.

The delegation of Egypt aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I would like to add the following points in my national capacity.

Egypt believes that trafficking in persons is a criminal act that goes against human values. Combating trafficking in persons is a priority of the Egyptian Government. Egypt is considered a State of transit and destination for refugees and migrants fleeing the ravages of war and armed conflict in the region — conflicts that create an environment rife with trafficking in persons, particularly carried out by terrorist groups, with the purpose of exploiting migrants, especially women and children.

Egypt has therefore been in the vanguard of States to have ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as, in 2004, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Moreover, together with Belarus in 2005, we launched an initiative to form the Group of Friends United against Human Trafficking.

At the national level, Egypt has established a legal and institutional framework that guarantees the implementation of its international obligations through a number of measures.

First, in October 2016, Egypt launched a national strategy to combat trafficking in persons, which was accompanied by a five-year action plan covering the years 2016 to 2021. It includes projects, awareness-raising campaigns, media campaigns and capacity-building for those working in Egypt on preventing and combating trafficking in persons.

Secondly, in 2010, Egypt promulgated a law to combat trafficking in persons. We have set up a national coordination committee to combat and prevent illegal migration and trafficking in persons.

Thirdly, Egypt has established specialized criminal departments within its courts of appeal in order to guarantee that issues related to trafficking in persons are dealt with more swiftly.

At the regional level, Egypt makes active efforts across all the regional initiatives in which it participates, including the following measures.

First, Egypt hosted the second regional ministerial conference of the African Union-Horn of Africa initiative to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, which was held in Sharm El-Sheikh in September 2016.

Secondly, Egypt hosted the trilateral meeting for the three main processes that are involved in preventing and combating trafficking in persons on the African continent, including the Khartoum process, the Rabat process and the African Union-Horn of Africa initiative to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.

Thirdly, Egypt acceded to the Arab model law on combating trafficking in persons and, in that regard, actively participates in the meetings of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration.

At the international level, Egypt actively seeks to cooperate with United Nations agencies and the relevant international organizations in order to prevent and combat trafficking in persons, especially the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organization for Migration. Egypt also actively participates in the ongoing consultative process on two global compacts — on migration and refugees — in order to pave the way for negotiations on those compacts in the near future. Egypt looks forward to arriving at two comprehensive and balanced documents that take into consideration the interests of all parties and States on migration and refugees.

The Security Council continues to set the legal framework that is necessary to combat trafficking in persons in areas of armed conflict. It has done so by adopting resolution 2388 (2017) today, and we would like to express our gratitude to the Italian delegation for the great effort it has exerted in order to arrive at a consensus resolution in the Council. In order to ensure that the resolution is implemented in a way that will guarantee its success, we would like to make the following points.

The General Assembly is the main specialized organ of the United Nations on the issue of trafficking in persons.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocoal are

considered the foundation for States to implement Security Council resolutions, including everything pertaining to the definition of the crime of trafficking in persons and exploitation.

It is important that the international community redouble its efforts in order to cut off all sources of funding for terrorist organizations, including funding from trafficking in persons, using all international mechanisms available to do so.

The crime of trafficking in persons, including women and girls, is not tied to any religion, nationality or civilization. We also note the important role that traditional and religious leaders can play in dispelling the link that some extremist ideologies try to establish and disseminate.

It is important to note in the General Assembly the pioneering role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the field of trafficking in persons. We would like to welcome the activities that the UNODC has been carrying out in order to establish an operational framework for the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We recognize the important role of both the United Nations and the private sector in rupturing the links of trafficking in persons by following the chain of consumption and purchasing.

In conclusion, Egypt would like to reiterate its full support for the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is considered the governing framework for international cooperation in fighting that crime — not only for States but also for civil society and the private sector. Egypt supports the political declaration that was adopted in September for a second revision of that Global Plan of Action.

Mr. Bermúdez Álvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, for their briefings. We also thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on a subject that is of special interest to Uruguay.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2388 (2017), which reaffirms the importance of resolution 2331 (2016) and goes one step further in the fight against trafficking in persons, especially in conflict situations. Uruguay emphatically condemns trafficking in persons in the broadest sense, as well as related crimes, which are crimes that aim to exploit an individual and take advantage of him or her or his or her situation of vulnerability. This deplorable crime implies disregard for an individual as a human being, and the debasement of their human rights and their fundamental freedoms. It also involves the destruction of their human dignity.

Without going any further, recent press reports on the sale of slaves in Libya show that this scourge continues to thrive under our very noses. It is an aberration that should be unanimously and vigorously condemned; it cannot and should not be tolerated.

Over the past few years, the proliferation of armed conflicts and the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities have brought with them a series of consequences, including the phenomenon of unprecedented mass migration and situations of refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers, which are precisely the situations that can be exploited by traffickers of human beings, who are profiting in the vilest way possible from the vulnerability and misfortune of these individuals.

Trafficking in persons in situations of conflict is an issue that is global in reach, because it concerns not only countries of origin, but also countries of transit and destination of victims, as well as countries where criminal networks operate and where those networks' profits are transferred. Consequently, efforts aimed at combating trafficking in persons should be undertaken as a commitment of the international community as a whole. This is the point on which I wish to focus.

There is a series of initiatives that all States can promote so as to combat this scourge, whether or not they are involved in an armed conflict. As can be seen in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939), of particular relevance are State policies in taking up the fight against trafficking in persons and related crimes, but also migration policies in the area of refugees as well as judicial cooperation.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, constitute the international legal framework that sets forth obligations and standards to assist States in developing national instruments

for combating trafficking in persons. Accordingly, Uruguay would like to congratulate the Governments of Fiji and Japan for recently becoming parties to the Convention and the Protocol, and urges those States that have not yet done so to join them.

The efforts of States should be focused not only on fighting and combating trafficking in persons in situations of conflict, but also on guaranteeing the fundamental rights of victims by strengthening measures and mechanisms of prevention and protection. Those persons who are fleeing conflicts not only move around within the political borders of their own countries, but they also try to find a better lives across borders, in other States. As stated in the latest report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on this topic, 60 percent of trafficking victims are female foreigners in the country where they are identified.

Bearing that in mind, as we prepare to start negotiations on a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, Uruguay would like to stress the principle of non-criminalization of irregular migration, providing migrants with the tools they need for coping in countries of transit and destination, so that they can be less vulnerable to trafficking in persons. States should promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their status. In terms of refugees, it is important to ensure that those who seek refuge — until their applications are resolved — are provided with the basic means they need for access to social services of the country in which they find themselves. In that way, we can take concrete steps to prevent trafficking in persons.

Positive and inclusive national practices in the area of refugees and migrants set the right path for the international community to take in order to combat trafficking in persons, especially in situations of armed conflict. In addition, those responsible for such horrific crimes must be held accountable. In that regard, we congratulate the Secretary-General for establishing an investigative team to compile, preserve and store evidence of acts of terrorism, as well as human-trafficking activities. We would like to express in this forum the wholehearted support of Uruguay for this initiative, and we encourage other States to do the same and work with the investigative team where necessary.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as women and children, by adopting appropriate and specific measures at the domestic and international levels. We must acknowledge that we are the ones who must bring about real change by adopting a broad, comprehensive and multidimensional approach to the issues of human trafficking in conflicts. To that end, determination and political will are necessary. In this endeavour, the international community can count on Uruguay's unwavering commitment. The enactment of, and compliance with, modern legislation that is inspired in solidarity and international cooperation will be key for all these practices to be effectively pursued.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Italy's initiative in convening today's open debate and welcomes Under-Secretary of State Amendola, who has come to New York to preside over the meeting. I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing, as well as Executive Director Fedotov, Commissioner Chergui and Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro for their statements.

At present, protracted regional hotspot issues and unceasing armed conflicts have led to increasingly rampant activities by armed groups, terrorist organizations and transnational-organized-crime groups. Crimes in conflict situations, trafficking in persons included, are on the rise, posing a threat to people's lives and dignity. China supports international cooperation in addressing trafficking in persons in conflict situations.

First, we should enhance efforts to solve hotspot issues and help achieve peace, stability and sustainable development in conflict-affected areas at an early date. The international community should have a greater sense of urgency in seeking political settlement of hotspot issues, follow the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and assist countries in conflict in promoting peace and national reconciliation and settling disputes peacefully through dialogue and consultations.

Meanwhile, the root causes of conflicts must be addressed. The countries concerned must be supported in capacity-building for sustainable development, thereby creating a sound external environment for addressing trafficking in persons in conflict situations and protecting women and children in such situations.

Secondly, we must resolutely combat terrorism. All countries must follow a uniform standard and use comprehensive political, economic and cultural means to steadfastly combat all the terrorist organizations

listed by the Security Council and totally cut off terrorists' chains of funding fuelled by trafficking in persons. Effective measures must be taken to stop terrorist organizations from using the Internet to spread terrorists' audio- and video-messages or to conduct recruitment and incitement and to prevent people from being misled by terrorist and extremist ideology, thereby falling victim to human trafficking.

International counter-terrorism efforts must bring into full play the leading role of the United Nations and the Council, adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter and other recognized fundamental norms of international relations, and enhance coordination.

Thirdly, we should properly address the situation of refugees and migrants facing the mixed challenges of terrorism, regional conflicts and the mixed movements of refugees and migrants. The international community must make joint efforts to address the refugee problem within the international law framework of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. More support must be given to refugee host countries; xenophobia and discrimination against refugees must be eliminated; root causes must be addressed; and greater development assistance must be provided to developing countries in order to create conditions for the return of refugees and promote the stability and development of the countries of origin of refugees.

Fourthly, we should foster the capacity-building of the countries concerned and international cooperation to establish synergy in combating trafficking in persons in armed conflicts.

Countries in conflict have a primary responsibility for protecting their people and combating trafficking in persons, but they also face difficulties, such as inadequate resources and capacities. The international community must, while respecting national sovereignty and at the request of the countries concerned, provide constructive assistance in such fields as counter-terrorism and border control. Countries of origin, transit and destination must strengthen cooperation on border control, financial monitoring and judicial assistance. Relevant international and regional organizations should also play their unique roles in accordance with their own mandates, strengthen coordination and make joint efforts to address trafficking in persons in armed conflicts.

China will continue to support the international community in its efforts to address trafficking in persons and strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women and children in armed conflict areas. We remain committed to helping to achieve peace, stability, security and development in conflict-affected areas.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this debate and resolution 2388 (2017). They are further steps towards more robust Security Council action against trafficking. I also thank you, Under Secretary of Sate Amendola, for your presence at the debate, and I also thank all of our briefers.

It was just last week that we discussed the security challenges in the Mediterranean and their consequences (see S/PV.8106). The trafficking of humans is one of those most devastating of consequences: not only to those involved, but also to all of us who value the most basic of human rights. It was also last week that so many of us were outraged by that shocking video footage on CNN of modern slavery in Libya. As we know too well, the nature of today's conflicts has encouraged the growth of armed groups, terrorists and powerful criminal networks. They all thrive in the absence of the rule of law, and they profit on an unprecedented scale from the chaos of ungoverned spaces. Such groups prey on the most vulnerable, many of whom have already lost their families, their homes, their livelihoods, to steal the one thing they have left: their freedom. Such exploitation takes on many forms in conflict zones, including child labour, slavery and slavery-like practices, forced labour and sexual exploitation.

Two issues raised in the recent report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in conflict (S/2017/939) stood out to me. The first, as others have noted, was the call for improved data gathering, evidence collection and information sharing. Improved data is central to deepening our understanding of the problem. Evidence gathering allows us to prosecute perpetrators more effectively, and information sharing means victims are identified and supported faster.

The second issue was the report's call for a more coordinated United Nations response. Human trafficking cuts across all of the United Nations pillars. It is a security threat, a human rights violation and a development problem. Therefore, rather than competing with one another over resources or territory, we need United Nations agencies coordinating and each working to their comparative advantage. We strongly

support the Secretary-General's efforts to resolve this persistent challenge.

After several debates, the Security Council is now well informed of the problem of trafficking in conflict situations and, with resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017), we are now well equipped to act. I would like to draw attention to three issues that merit greater attention.

First, violent extremists profit financially from this trade in human misery, and it is vital that we integrate this understanding into efforts to combat terrorism. Without the robust use of the full range of existing mechanisms to counter terrorist financing and oppose sanctions, it will be impossible to eradicate the use of slavery as a means to resource and further the aims of terrorist groups.

Secondly, we must act to ensure that global supply chains, which often reach into conflict zones, do not fuel the crime of trafficking. We welcome the fact that resolution 2388 (2017) calls on the United Nations to enhance transparency in is procurement and supply chains. The whole international community can go further in this area.

Thirdly, just as we understand how trafficking drives conflict, we should acknowledge how efforts to address trafficking contribute to peace. Measures to address trafficking by field missions — whether through human rights monitoring or capacity-building for police — should not be seen as add-ons, but as core to efforts to build stability. More broadly, we should consider how anti-trafficking features in the sustaining peace agenda, which is all about using a cross section of United Nations tools to prevent conflicts and build peace.

Finally, let us not lose sight of who it is that we are working for: the victims and the survivors. Those images on CNN shocked because they showed that this most degrading form of exploitation is tragically not a thing of the past; it just happening today and it just happening on our watch. No matter how we choose to describe it — human trafficking, modern slavery, forced labour — let us stand together in our commitment to end the exploitation of human beings and safeguard the dignity of those who are most vulnerable. It is only by doing so that we can hope to succeed in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Under Secretary of State of Italy.

This open debate today confirms the consistent commitment of the Security Council to effectively address the issue of trafficking in persons and the serious violations of human rights related to it. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) is a concrete step forward in preventing and countering this scourge. The Security Council thereby builds upon resolution 2331 (2016), and the comprehensive report (S/2017/939) of the Secretary-General on the implementation of this resolution to reaffirm the paramount importance of aligning national legislation to the international legal framework set by the Palermo Convention and other relevant international instruments.

It also moves forward by emphasizing the urgency for Member States to strengthen identification, registration, protection and assistance for displaced persons falling prey to trafficking. Timely detection of routes and victims is key to effectively countering this plight while addressing the specific needs of the most vulnerable, especially women and children, who make up the vast majority of the victims of trafficking. The importance that the Council attaches to a victim-centred approach is also testified by the special attention given to unaccompanied and separated children, whose increasing number is a matter of great concern.

The resolution also endorses the comprehensive approach promoted by the Secretary-General to make the United Nations system's action more effective and coherent and, to that end, opens the way to further discussions on the role of United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions in supporting host State efforts' to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.

As proven by our action as a member of the Council, we strongly condemn trafficking in persons, especially when it involves women and children, and we remain on the front lines in combating it, as we do on a daily basis in the Mediterranean, while prioritizing the protection of human rights.

Trafficking in persons is a complex phenomenon and a crime with a global dimension that must be prevented and countered through an effective and coordinated response by the entire international community. In fact, as highlighted in the *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2016, within the massive migratory movements of the past few years — the largest ever seen

since the Second World War — figures related to the exploitation by smugglers and traffickers of vulnerable children, women and men are increasingly concerning. International efforts should follow a victim-centred, gender-specific and child-sensitive approach and should take into consideration the links between transnational organized crime, terrorism and trafficking networks.

Equally, the response of States should be based on a common understanding of trafficking in persons and a widely accepted legal framework. We therefore confirm and support the importance of a universal ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children.

Increased international, regional and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin and transit of migrants is of paramount importance, as many speakers have underscored. As a concrete contribution to that process, our country decided to support the two projects implemented by UNODC aimed at enhancing legal cooperation in the fight against traffickers in West, North and East Africa. As stated in the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted by the General Assembly at the high-level meeting in September, human trafficking is often more likely to happen in situations where social, economic cultural, political and other factors make people more vulnerable to trafficking.

We should therefore insist on a comprehensive approach aimed at addressing high-risk factors, such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, humanitarian emergencies, social exclusion and marginalization. Human trafficking is a multidimensional phenomenon that entails threats to respect for fundamental human rights and to international peace and security. For those reasons, the Council should continue to keep that issue high on its agenda. We all need to make additional efforts, to work to prevent and to counter it and to give to its victims relief and new opportunities to rebuild their lives.

In that regard, we recently contributed to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate through the lunch hour, as we have a large number of participants.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take the floor on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries during this open debate on a matter of great importance.

At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, as well as Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for their presentations.

The Non-Aligned Movement has consistently expressed its concern about trafficking in persons in the belief that such trafficking is increasingly becoming a global challenge that affects all countries around the world, as demonstrated by the growing number of victims. The issue therefore requires a concerted national and international response in order to fulfil the commitments made by adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, among other reasons.

Moreover, States members of the Movement are particularly concerned about the serious humanitarian emergencies that have been triggered by various factors, including armed conflict, poverty, gender inequality, human rights violations, violations of fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, at both the national and the international levels, injustice and impunity, political instability, the breakdown of democracy, foreign occupation, terrorism, genocide and ethnic cleansing. All those elements have caused millions of people to become displaced in their own countries or to migrate or to seek refuge overseas in the pursuit of safety, stability, opportunities and development at the risk of greater vulnerability by being subjected to crimes such as human trafficking.

In that regard, while recognizing that victims of those crimes are particularly exposed to racism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, among others, we reaffirm the Movement's commitment to preventing human rights violations in line with the rule of law and its obligation under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, and in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Likewise, States members of the Movement underscore the need to ensure that people who have been trafficked, with whom they express their solidarity, are treated as victims of crime and, in line with national legislation, are not penalized or stigmatized for their involvement in unlawful activities in which they have been forced to engage. Similarly, it is imperative to break any cycle of impunity that may exist and to hold accountable those responsible for committing such crimes, which, in some circumstances, may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity.

As rightly noted in the concept note for this open debate (S/2017/972, annex), human trafficking is both a cause and a consequence of conflict and instability, affecting in particular women, children, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. That phenomenon must be addressed both collectively and comprehensively, including by examining its root causes and drivers and taking into account its multidimensional nature, in order to adopt a consistent, comprehensive and coordinated approach. At the same time, it is also important to recognize the role and responsibilities of the countries of origin, transit and destination in effectively promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals subjected to such crimes and in committing to coordination of their efforts and active cooperation with one another. That means adopting a preventive rather than a military approach to address such a complex issue, including through enhanced international cooperation.

In addition, as noted earlier, that global phenomenon has been triggered by, inter alia, armed conflict, which serves as a breeding ground for terrorism. In that regard, the Movement expresses its concern over the growing links between that scourge and transnational organized crime, taking into account that human trafficking is being used as a way to finance and to recruit for terrorist activities. In recent years, that situation has been exacerbated by situations of armed conflict in various regions of the world. One of the many examples that we could unfortunately mention is the current situation in the Sahelo-Saharan region, where hostage-taking, involving ransom payments, and terrorist acts threaten regional security and stability due to, among other factors, the ever-increasing links among the illicit trafficking of firearms, illicit drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, hence the importance of resolutely and effectively combating transnational organized crime, including human trafficking.

In that regard, the Movement urges States to address that issue through international, regional and bilateral cooperation and dialogue and, inter alia, to implement and to strengthen effective measures to combat and to eliminate all forms of transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, in order to counter the demand for trafficked victims and to protect the victims, in particular women and children subjected to forced labour, sexual or commercial exploitation, violence and sexual abuse, and to bring to justice the perpetrators of those crimes. At the same time, we underscore the importance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and call on States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. Likewise, States members of the Movement call on the international community to consider establishing national and local institutions dedicated to the fight against that scourge.

Moreover, while stressing the importance of the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in the comprehensive fight against that scourge, States members of the Movement commend the high-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the implementation of that Plan of Action, held in New York on 27 and 28 September, and the political declaration adopted at that time. We would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize the historic opportunity presented by the intergovernmental conference on migration to be held from 10 to 11 December 2018 in Morocco, and to express our commitment to contributing actively to the negotiation process on a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

In discussing the central theme of today's open debate, we must also take into account the current unprecedented flows of refugees and migrants, an

issue that was discussed at length at the seventeenth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held in September 2016 on Isla de Margarita in Venezuela. The Heads of State and Government at the Summit acknowledged the humanitarian emergencies that this global and growing phenomenon has created, along with an enormous number of refugees, chiefly the result of conflict, with particular repercussions for women and children.

The member States of the Movement also emphasize the importance of ensuring that all States address the problem of trafficking in persons and international migration through a cooperative dialogue on an equal footing. In that regard, we strongly urge the international community to refrain from taking any measures that stigmatize particular groups or individuals, including third-country nationals and their families. We should also point out that there is no one solution to the problem of trafficking in persons. We must therefore formulate strategies adapted to national ownership and aimed at preventing and combating illegal practices such as these that violate victims' human rights.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement, in rejecting any politicization of the fight against human trafficking and attempts to use it as a tool for undermining States' political stability, would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its concern about the Security Council's continued usurpation of the functions and powers of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council by its consideration of issues that traditionally fall within the remit of those bodies. In that regard, and on the subject under discussion in today's open debate, the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirm the role and authority of the General Assembly, including in matters related to international peace and security, as the main deliberative, normative and representative organ of the United Nations, in line with the provisions of Article 12 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your country, Italy, for convening today's open debate and for the concept note (S/2017/972, annex) that you have prepared for us. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and, of course, Ms. Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for their briefings.

I echo the words of so many who have preceded me in emphasizing the horror of the images that we have seen on television of slavery in the Mediterranean, showing human beings being sold like merchandise, and the condemnation of the Secretary-General, which says it all. Slavery has no place in our world. By its nature and its global effects, trafficking in persons, a twenty-first-century form of slavery, leads to serious violations of human rights whose effects have touched my country too. Every year we identify and assist many victims of crimes that range from sexual exploitation to forced labour and begging. For that reason, we welcome the renewed support for the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, shown by the General Assembly's adoption in September of the political declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action (resolution 72/1), along with the various related Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which are unequivocal, as well as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which adopted at the high-level meeting on refugees and migrants in 2016.

Next year's intergovernmental conference on migration in the General Assembly will be an opportunity for all of us to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and will create an additional framework for cooperation among States. As the concept note says so eloquently, such mechanisms, agreements and plans will enable us to continue to eliminate the legal loopholes that organized crime takes advantage of in our countries by increasing the exchange of good practices and lessons learned on ways in which Member States can tackle such transnational crime more effectively.

Colombia considers trafficking in persons as a type of transnational organized crime. Many countries simultaneously become points of origin, transit and destination for victims, which makes the process of preventing such crimes and investigating and prosecuting criminal organizations and the links between them much more difficult. We join those who have been promoting the universal ratification of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementary to the United Nations Convention

against Transnational Organized Crime. It has served as a platform for Colombia to accede to and implement eight memorandums of understanding and bilateral agreements with countries in our region.

Following the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939), we support the efforts of UNODC and other agencies in the United Nations system with experience in the fight against trafficking to help Member States combat it. Our goal is zero trafficking. Let us commit to stronger cooperation for decisive global action that can put an end to the abominable trade of human beings forever.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important open debate. Ireland aligns itself fully with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the European Union (EU).

Ireland was proud to be a sponsor of resolution 2331 (2016) on trafficking in persons in conflict, adopted last December. It is crucial that we continue to build on that momentum.

We welcome the report of the Secretary General (S/2017/972), as well as his remarks here this morning. While some progress has been made on this issue, a great deal clearly remains to be done. We know that human trafficking is complex in its nature, scope and causes. Poverty, economic hardship and a lack of opportunity are of course significant factors in making people vulnerable to human traffickers. That is why we must all work to ensure implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But we also know that armed conflicts and humanitarian crises increase people's risk of falling into the hands of traffickers. Our collective focus on sustaining peace, particularly in the context of support to conflict-prevention initiatives at the national, regional and international level, will also directly contribute to stemming the tide of human trafficking.

As others have said, it is often the most vulnerable who are targeted by human traffickers — women, children, migrants, refugees and displaced persons. In particular, women and children are more vulnerable when social, political and legal structures break down. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is a form of gender-based violence. That is why we believe that there should be an increased focus on programmes aimed at preventing girls from falling prey to traffickers. The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants commits all States to ensuring that our response to large flows of refugees and migrants mainstreams a gender perspective. As a strong supporter of resolution 1325 (2000) and the women and peace and security agenda, and as current Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, Ireland believes that women must be empowered to act as agents of change in addressing the issue of human trafficking.

Ireland's commitments to preventing and combating human trafficking are set out in our national action plan, which is now in its second phase. We have contributed substantial funds in support of the fight against human trafficking. That includes providing support to the EU's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which has a particular focus on the fight against human trafficking, as well as the anti-trafficking mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We also provide funding to a range of international organizations and civil-society partners focused on conflict-related sexual violence around the world. We believe that raising public awareness is key to preventing and combating human trafficking. Civil society has a crucial role to play as a watchdog in conflict situations, a role that should be respected and supported.

As the Secretary-General has said, we must strengthen our efforts to better protect people affected by conflict and at risk of trafficking and to bring those responsible for trafficking to justice. That includes strengthening national responses, as well as working better together internationally. It also means that the issue of human trafficking must be embedded in our discussions on peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate.

Trafficking in persons is the commodification of human bodies. It is probably one of the most degrading experiences that human beings can be subjected to. Simply put, it is a modern version of slavery. I would like to make five proposals, based on a simple premise. Human trafficking typically occurs, or occurs more easily, in conflict situations. In such situations, the rule of law is very clearly broken, the judiciary is inadequate

and States are unable to address those challenges. That is why the Security Council has to take action, as was outlined in resolution 2331 (2016), which was adopted under Spain's presidency of the Council, and which today has been superbly complemented with the Council's adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) under Italy's leadership. These are my five proposals.

First, we must combat fragmentation. I think it is clear that we are working to combat trafficking in persons from various areas within the United Nations, such as the Security Council and General Assembly. However, what we are lacking is a comprehensive vision and strategy. I propose that we ask the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to prepare a report on the basic guidelines for such a comprehensive strategy.

Secondly, there is a very close link between children and armed conflict and trafficking in persons. Unfortunately, they go hand-in-hand. In that regard, I would like to commend the sterling work undertaken by the delegation of Sweden, and I urge Sweden to monitor situations where there is a connection between children and trafficking in persons.

Thirdly, I believe we should enhance and leverage our peacekeeping operations and special political missions as much as possible. Listening to some statements today, we have all understood that there have been tragic events in a certain Mediterranean country, and everyone has emphasized that. What I want to say is that we should make the best possible use of our peacekeeping operations and special political missions with a view to detecting such incidents of human trafficking and reporting them to the Security Council.

My fourth proposal is about the victims of trafficking, whom we have sometimes compared to the victims of terrorism. We must not forget them, for they need all the attention we can give them. I would like to underscore the importance of resolution 2379 (2017), which established an accountability mechanism for the fight against Da'esh in Iraq. I believe that it is a model that we can follow. Lastly, there is the role of States. I believe we cannot always blame multilateralism. Nation States are also responsible and I urge them to take measures to combat trafficking in persons.

In conclusion, I would like to bring up a proposal by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, which I believe is of great interest, for establishing a worldwide network of anti-trafficking coordinators that could effectively address this issue, which is one of the worst scourges of the twenty-first century. It costs almost nothing and a form of it already exists within the European Union. I call on all other nations to take the same steps.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): I would like to thank Italy for putting this very important issue on the Council's agenda and for convening an open debate for all of us. I would also like to recognize the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and to join others in thanking Secretary-General António Guterres and Special Rapporteur Maria Grazia Giammarinaro for their informative briefings. Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Human trafficking is a global threat, and we must fight it together globally. In that regard, we welcome the Council's adoption today of resolution 2388 (2017), of which we were a sponsor, as it is an important step forward in the fight against such heinous crimes and the wave of human rights violations they have led to. We are especially appalled by the recent news reports showing migrants in Libya apparently being sold as slaves. Horrendous crimes are being committed again and again.

Hungary is of the view that a number of steps must be taken if we are to fight this global threat more effectively. First, an approach to human trafficking that is genuinely centred on human rights and survivors should be based on protecting those survivors, with a special focus on women and children. Furthermore, our response should be gender- and age-sensitive, as well as specific to the particular type of exploitation involved. We must ensure a holistic approach from the local to the global level, using the tools available within the United Nations system.

Secondly, in order to effectively implement the relevant resolutions at the national and international level, close and comprehensive cooperation and effective partnerships are needed among States, international organizations, civil society and business groups. We recognize the importance of international cooperation in combating human trafficking from the perspective of both law enforcement and victim assistance. In that spirit, Hungary maintains close cooperation with destination countries for human trafficking. For example, we have established a transnational referral

mechanism with the Netherlands and Belgium, and we recently concluded a similar project with Switzerland. Internationally, we continue to cooperate actively both during investigation and asset recovery, and Hungary's police have participated in numerous joint actions. In our opinion, inter-agency cooperation must start at the national level. In Hungary, significant measures have been taken to combat human trafficking, including establishing a national coordination mechanism.

Thirdly, we advocate for greater compliance with international humanitarian law, and for greater accountability, by ending impunity and bringing the perpetrators to justice. Certain acts associated with trafficking in persons, such as sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and other forms of sexual violence, may constitute war crimes, in our view. Furthermore, acts associated with trafficking in persons could constitute elements of genocide or crimes against humanity. Hungary therefore supports including perpetrators of trafficking in persons on United Nations and unilateral sanctions lists. As a member of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, Hungary is committed to supporting all initiatives aimed at preventing and ending genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the adoption of a code of conduct in the Security Council.

Lastly, we should also explore the role that existing mechanisms tasked with investigating allegations of violations of international humanitarian law could play in ensuring that those crimes are investigated by the competent authorities. Last year, for examople, Hungary became a member of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission. We actively support national and international efforts in that regard, and we greatly appreciate the work of the United Nations Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict. Recognizing that women can be especially vulnerable to trafficking in persons in conflict situations and to conflict-related sexual violence, Hungary is proud to contribute to the invaluable work of the gender advisers deployed in the framework of the collaboration between UN-Women and the Justice Rapid Response initiative, as well as the work of UN-Women on preventing violent extremism.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome today's discussion and its thematic focus and would like to see it become a regular item on the agenda of the Council, with annual reporting by the Secretary-General. We would like to thank you, Sir, for ably coordinating the preparation of resolution 2388 (2017), adopted earlier today, of which we were happy to be a sponsor.

Human trafficking and modern slavery are phenomena whose relevance goes well beyond situations of armed conflict. They need to be tackled on the basis of the comprehensive agreement reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A strong law-enforcement response to human trafficking is imperative. We particularly call on all States to contribute to ensuring the universal acceptance of the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air supplementary to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. However, prevention requires a more comprehensive approach, as reflected in the resolution adopted this morning.

Irregular migration creates high levels of vulnerability and poses a particular challenge. We will need a strong outcome from the forthcoming negotiations on the global compact for migration. Some of the situations on the Council's agenda starkly illustrate the drastic consequences of the lack of regular migration channels. Libya is one such case, as the Council has recognized in its pertinent resolutions, and as has been brought to broader public attention by recent media reports. The recurrence of the crudest and most brutal forms of modern slavery both exacerbates the situation in Libya itself and puts us all to collective shame. The Convention on the Abolition of Slavery predates the creation of the United Nations by many years and has led to a universally binding norm under international law that prohibits slavery. And yet in Libya and in other countries and regions — some on the Council's agenda, some not — this assault on the most basic sense of human dignity continues, often as part and parcel of organized crime.

The recognition in today's resolution that offences associated with trafficking in persons may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity is important. It is a further indication of the potential role of international criminal justice in tackling human trafficking and modern slavery when national legal systems are unable or unwilling to do so. It underscores the importance of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in situations where it has jurisdiction, such as

in Libya, where the Security Council's own referral established ICC jurisdiction.

Our national efforts to contribute to the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery are focused on the financial side of the crime. This is a business that generates some $150 billion in revenue every year. On the basis of resolution 2331 (2016), we have undertaken, in particular through our partnership with United Nations University, to design measures aimed at disrupting financial chains associated with human trafficking and modern slavery. The tools that have been developed to combat other forms of organized crime can also be effective in the fight against slavery-related crimes. We have formulated a set of concrete measures in that regard that we will make available through our website and on social media, and we are grateful that the initiative is reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939).

Our financial intelligence unit has worked with its counterparts in the framework of the Egmont Group, Moneyval and the Financial Action Task Force to discuss and disseminate these measures. In parallel, we are reaching out to our own financial institutions to discuss how best to work together to analyse and address the relevant risks, and we encourage others to do likewise. We are confident that this is a promising path and look forward to effective follow-up on it in the Security Council and elsewhere.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): We would like to thank the Italian presidency of the Council for organizing today's debate. We also thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons for their valuable contributions.

I align myself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Trafficking in persons, especially in conflict situations, is becoming a global challenge, with growing numbers of victims. As such, it requires a resolute response at the national and international level. Human trafficking is both a source and a result of conflict and instability, and it especially affects society's most vulnerable members. It must be addressed collectively and comprehensively, including by taking a close look at its root causes. This growing global challenge, linked to acute humanitarian emergencies, is usually a symptom rather than a cause. It is underlying factors — particularly foreign aggression and intervention, occupation, war and protracted conflicts, political instability, terrorism, genocide and ethnic cleansing — that create conditions in which millions of people become displaced within their own countries or seek refuge overseas in a quest for safety, stability and opportunity. These journeys can themselves put migrants at great risk of falling victim to human trafficking, forced labour and contemporary forms of slavery.

Dealing with these root causes is a primary responsibility of the Security Council, but if the Council chooses to focus instead on symptoms, it will undoubtedly fail to address the causes effectively. The current situation in Libya and the concerns about reported enslavement are examples of such issues. Where is the accountability for the States whose invasion created the current situation in Libya?

At the same time, I would like to underscore the vital importance of impartial and reliable data on trafficking in persons at different levels. Those Member States whose destructive military options have left millions at the risk of exploitation and trafficking are in no position to produce politicized reports labeling others and denying their own responsibility.

We believe that addressing root causes, working for prevention, protecting victims, prosecuting traffickers and establishing partnerships at the global level must be the pillars of any comprehensive approach to combating trafficking in persons. The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to preventing and fighting all forms of human trafficking and to countering this horrible crime. To that end, in 2004 our Parliament adopted a law on combating human trafficking that has since been revised to fill gaps and strengthen the domestic legal regime.

We urgently need to scale up international cooperation, including in capacity-building and technical assistance, to combat trafficking in persons. We support joint measures by Member States, including through regional and subregional initiatives, to step up implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Indeed, the complex synergy that exists between trafficking in persons and certain organized crimes, such as drug

trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, requires better information-sharing, technical assistance and enhanced capacity-building for law-enforcement and justice departments. Meanwhile, education and awareness-raising on the issue of human trafficking should be an integral part of the policies of countries of origin, transit and of destination. People who knowingly or inadvertently use the services provided by persons who have been trafficked are as much in need of training as those who are at risk of being trafficked.

In conclusion, we recognize the important role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the global fight against trafficking in persons, because of the significant role it can play in promoting the partnership pillar of the global campaign against trafficking in persons, as well as its function in collecting and analysing relevant information. Its biennial *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* is an important element in efforts to implement and follow up on the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and in fostering international cooperation in combating this heinous crime.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate on the dreadful issue of trafficking in persons in conflict situations, which has become increasingly widespread. We support the Security Council's continued consideration of this issue and its examination of ways to address a phenomenon that is a flagrant violation of human dignity and human rights.

While emphasizing the significance of the proposals for countering the issue outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939), it is our view that predicting and preventing outbreaks of armed conflict and their exacerbation, as well as employing preventive diplomacy, are the best ways to avoid the untold tragedies and human suffering that such conflict causes. Regrettably, such hopeful efforts are usually obstructed by numerous negative foreign interventions motivated by competing interests that frequently help to create and exacerbate these conflicts, resulting in serious hardships reaching far beyond national borders and becoming a matter of growing concern to the international community.

We agree the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report that regions suffering from the effects of armed conflict and instability are particularly vulnerable to the practices of human trafficking networks. Such networks see a State's fragility as an opportunity to achieve their immoral objectives. Libya is no exception to that rule. It is, however, anxious to address any violations perpetrated against illegal migrants to the extent that its means and capabilities permit. We were deeply shocked by the information in paragraph 7 of the report, which noted that media outlets have been reporting on incidents of trafficking in persons in Libya in which migrants are being auctioned as commodities in slave markets. In that regard, I would like to highlight a statement by the Libyan Foreign Ministry that we have transmitted to the Council condemning and denouncing such acts. If substantiated, the reports describe inhumane practices that are incompatible with our national legislation and that Libyan society's values and morals abhor. The Foreign Ministry's statement confirms that the Libyan authorities have launched an investigation into the allegations and will hold the perpetrators and anyone involved accountable. Libya's Ministry of Justice has also issued a statement in which it underscores its willingness to investigate the allegations.

We reaffirm our commitment to the international agreements that criminalize trafficking in persons. We are eager to continue to cooperate with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and look forward to the return to the Maghreb of the subregional office on drugs and crime so that it can resume its activities in Tripoli.

Human-trafficking network have benefited from communications technologies and have become transnational. That is one reason why we hosted a border security conference in Tripoli in 2013 in which neighbouring countries took part, along with representatives from countries of the Sahel, the European Union, the United Nations and others. The conference reached important conclusions that, if implemented, would help to reduce organized crime, illegal migration, trafficking in drugs and persons, and other crimes. We stand ready to hold consultations in order to reactivate those conclusions.

Libya is a transit country for large and constant flows of illegal migrants. We have been experiencing great difficulties that have affected our own citizens. It is therefore unfair to single out Libya for blame for the consequences of such migration, which we all agree exceed the capacities of any one State. We support the

view that a practical way to deal with this issue is by addressing the real reasons that drive people to leave their homes, with a view to developing long-term, lasting solutions. We believe that devising plans to prevent migrants from entering countries of destination and to force them to return to our country are simply a way to shirk responsibility and represent an additional burden for Libya, which has repeatedly expressed its need for technical support in order to manage its borders in a sound and sustainable manner. We affirm our rejection of any attempts to settle migrants in our country, because of the dangerous repercussions they could have for the social and cultural fabric of Libyan society.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to join forces to help Libya address the challenges posed by irregular migration by adopting an effective approach to migration and its root causes, rather than by exploiting unsubstantiated media reports for the purposes of defamation, which will not help us to achieve the progress we desire in reducing the risks and consequences of that type of migration.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me also join others in thanking you, Sir, for convening today's debate on such a vital issue. We appreciate the insightful remarks by the Secretary-General earlier today, and thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for their briefings.

We align ourselves with the statement made earlier by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Trafficking in persons is an abomination, a modern-day equivalent of slavery. Sadly, it is a global phenomenon that violates the principles of morality, human rights and human dignity. It undermines our efforts to achieve sustainable development. Like others, we are outraged by recent reports that African migrants in Libya have been exposed to the indignity of slavery. We joined the Secretary-General in his condemnation of such egregious actions, which have no place in our world. The international community must unite in fighting this scourge.

The increasing numbers of conflicts, growing economic inequality and a widening gap between rich and poor provide fertile ground to those who exploit human suffering. Human trafficking as a consequence of conflict, and its increasingly worrisome links to terrorist groups, are a global concern. On the other hand, human trafficking has also become a cause of friction among States. Human traffickers typically work with organized crime networks and underworld mafias.

The unprecedented ease of communication and transportation in an increasingly globalized world enables human traffickers and terrorist networks to permeate societies. According to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939), raging conflicts and humanitarian crises have resulted in record levels of displacement, with 24.2 million people newly displaced, the majority of whom are women and children. Those harrowing numbers, the countless stories behind each of the victims and the spreading patterns of exploitation by terrorist groups compel us to redouble our efforts to combat this scourge and to call for united and collective action by the international community. The transnational nature of this complex crime demands enhanced international cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, together with its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, provides the blueprint for concentrating and focusing our efforts on preventing, protecting and prosecuting. The adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) by the Security Council last December was another positive step that acknowledged the connection between trafficking in persons, sexual violence, terrorist groups and transnational organized crime.

Let me also take this opportunity underscore my country's commitment to fighting the egregious crime of trafficking in persons.

First, Pakistan is a party to the various relevant international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, and the Convention concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour. Secondly, we have implemented a comprehensive policy, the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. Thirdly, we are implementing our National Strategic Framework 2016-2022 on trafficking in persons and

human smuggling, under which, inter alia, a number of victims have been provided shelter. Fourthly, provincial Governments are strengthening trafficking-related legislation, with more focus on investigation, prosecution and convicting traffickers.

Given the vulnerabilities of men, women and children to numerous forms of exploitation, including sale and trafficking in the context of conflict and humanitarian crisis, a comprehensive and rights-based response is needed. The global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration will provide us with an opportunity to correct some of the past mistakes and protect people on the move from trafficking and other forms of exploitation. We earnestly hope that its adoption will help strengthen the existing global legal framework. Increasing States' capacities with long-term politicaland financial commitment holds the key.

Additionally and above all, the Security Council, as the primary body tasked with maintaining peace and security, also needs to address the root causes of conflict to remove the grounds where such crimes breed. Unless we deal decisively with those breeding grounds, the rest of our efforts, however well intentioned and well focused, might just be in vain. They are necessary but may not be sufficient until we really address the root causes of conflicts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Duque Estrada Meyer (Brazil): We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/939) and briefing, and extend our appreciation to all the other briefers.

Human trafficking is among the most despicable crimes known to humankind, as it affects those most vulnerable. This debate is an opportunity to renew our political commitment to eradicating human trafficking, while recognizing the multifaceted nature of the problem. Brazil reaffirms the importance of prevention and the provision of assistance to victims, alongside enforcement actions.

We cannot shy away from acknowledging that long-term solutions will arise only from multilateral approaches to peace and security that tackle the underlying causes of conflicts and firmly set dialogue and mediation as priorities. More often than not, military intervention leads to increased civilian suffering and vulnerability.

Brazil supports every effort aimed at recovering the dignity of the victims and ensuring that they have access to justice. Closer cooperation among States and international agencies can help rescue victims and put in place measures to bring the perpetrators of this serious crime to justice. Advancing the universality of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court would also contribute to ensuring accountability for those responsible for these crimes in the context of an armed conflict.

It should be clear that terrorism and transnational organized crime are different problems, requiring different remedies. An interrelationship between these phenomena might arise in specific circumstances, but should in no way be deemed universal. It is critical to pay attention to the forum in which these issues are primarily discussed.

While human trafficking may occur in some scenarios plagued by armed conflict, there are no intrinsic or automatic linkages between these phenomena. Human trafficking also takes place in situations that are not related to threats to international peace and security, such as displacements following natural disasters.

If the scourge of human trafficking is to be effectively addressed by the United Nations, the Security Council should be mindful of the mandate and technical expertise of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as of the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in this regard.

Individuals crossing borders are especially vulnerable to human traffickers. The international community has a responsibility to resolve the refugee crisis. It is not coherent to defend the responsibility to protect and the protection of civilians, while turning our backs on those fleeing conflict and persecution. Brazil is proud to welcome Syrian refugees through the issuance of humanitarian visas.

Brazil reiterates that the criminalization of irregular migration is unacceptable, since it ultimately strengthens human trafficking and leads to the disrespect of the fundamental rights of migrants. It is critical not to confuse the criminalization of the trafficking of persons with the criminalization of migration in and of itself. Our actions should aim at protecting the rights of and providing assistance to those people who are forced

to leave their homes and fall prey to human traffickers, and not to victimize them yet again.

The Brazilian experience of granting humanitarian visas to Haitians since 2012 has shown that one of the most effective means of dismantling criminal human trafficking networks is to provide regular and safe ways of entry for those forced to move. It is also worth mentioning that, last year, Brazil adopted a new national law on human trafficking that includes strengthened measures aimed at providing protection and assistance to the victims. It sets forth more severe penalties for the perpetrators of the crime and provides the possibility of issuing residence permit to the victims.

Let us all work together to ensure that human trafficking is brought to a definitive end, keeping ever in mind the best interests and dignity of the victims.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Ms. Lind (Estonia): I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia. We would like to thank Italy for convening this open debate and to commend you, Sir, for your leadership on and commitment to this important issue.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Today the world is facing persistent challenges in the fight against human trafficking, in particular in conflict situations. The international community should confront this phenomenon in the most comprehensive manner. We are gravely concerned about the alarming increase of connections between armed groups, including terrorist groups, and trafficking in persons. Resolution 2388 (2017), which was adopted by the Security Council today and which we co-sponsored, is an important milestone in that regard. Building on resolution 2331 (2016), it condemns all acts of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict, which are used by terrorist groups both to terrorize and to finance terrorism.

We also note with concern the criminal misuse of information and communication technologies, particularly the Internet, to facilitate trafficking in persons. We emphasize the importance of countering this phenomenon while fully respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Trafficking in persons is considered to be one of the most difficult problems in the context of migration as well. The fact that women and children are at greater risk of being trafficked and subjected to forced labour is recognized in the New York declaration for refugees and migrants. We welcome the adoption by the General Assembly, at the high-level meeting in September, of the political declaration on the implementation of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1). The declarations show the political will to end human trafficking, and now we need to start their implementation.

The nexus between situations of conflict and human trafficking, facilitated by the absence of the rule of law, means that human trafficking can exacerbate conflict and foster continuous insecurity. The exploitation of vulnerable people, especially women and children who find themselves in a situation of conflict, by traffickers is appalling. It is imperative to investigate, prosecute and convict the perpetrators of human trafficking crimes and to put an end to impunity.

The focus on prevention is pivotal and is central to the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Together with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it advances sustainable and inclusive development in order to address the root causes and vulnerabilities. We also need to find ways to actively combat the demand for trafficked people for exploitation in the destination and transit countries. As long as there is a will to pay criminals and a demand for such purposes as sexual exploitation, forced labour and slavery, we cannot put an end to human trafficking.

Finally, we fully support the central role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the global fight against trafficking in persons, particularly in providing technical assistance to Member States to implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In that context, we reiterate the call of the European Union for more cooperation at the United Nations level and emphasize the role of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons in ensuring that efforts to fight against human trafficking across the United Nations system are coherent.

Mrs. Van Vlierberge (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank you, Mr. President, for having convened today's important debate.

Belgium fully aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to make the following comments in its national capacity.

Trafficking in human beings attacks the very core of the societies it affects. It constitutes a serious violation of human rights; it undermines the rule of law; it denies the very principle of human dignity. Aggravating circumstances and situations of conflict or humanitarian crisis — due to their inherent instability and precariousness — are breeding grounds for this most abject trade, the effects of which are devastating. Belgium will therefore continue to make a commitment to combat this phenomenon.

At the international level, my country will continue to insist on the importance and the coherence and continuity of action of the multilateral system and Member States in the face of this scourge. Strong action is needed at all levels, from the prevention of the phenomenon to the effective identification and interception of existing networks and the prosecution of individuals and organizations guilty of this crime. My country's participation in international initiatives like the Alliance 8.7 — the Global Alliance to Eradicate Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour — illustrates our commitment to this issue.

We join calls for increased stakeholder awareness. Trafficking should not be fought only in the countries of destination, but at every possible stage of the ordeal of victims, whether in the country of origin or in transit countries. That consciousness-raising requires the training of the various actors involved in the phenomenon. I am thinking in particular of the international and national personnel deployed in the field of conflicts and in humanitarian crises or their surroundings. We must also ensure the training and awareness of local authorities. We would support any United Nations initiative to ensure the structural mainstreaming of measures to deal withtrafficking in persons within mission mandates.

In our view, it is essential to integrate actions to combat human trafficking in an active and systematic way in our response to emergent or protracted humanitarian situations. Belgium has, in the past, organized training for its military personnel deployed in humanitarian contexts and is planning further training in the future.

Whether in times of peace, conflict or humanitarian crisis, different agencies and institutions have valuable expertise to share. The scale of the phenomenon of human trafficking makes it necessary for us to make every effort to ensure the unreserved collaboration and coordination between agencies and organizations, in respect for the skills and expertise of each ,especially by making greater use of mechanism of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons.

Many studies confirm the nexus between terrorist organizations and trafficking networks. In the face of the military defeat of Da'esh, we must double our vigilance to dismantle the networks that continue to fund that organization and others like it. We must also adapt our approach to new developments, particularly the plight of minors, children and families of combatants, who are all particularly vulnerable to human trafficking.

As a destination country, Belgium assumes its responsibility to fight impunity in the area of human trafficking. Our experience has shown us that it is valuable to have specialized magistrates designated to handle cases involving the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking. We note that the appointment of specific magistrates for human trafficking in each judicial district has proved particularly effective and has resulted in a significant number of convictions for both sexual and economic exploitation. We would be delighted to share our experience with other countries that so desire.

I would like to end my statement by reaffirming our support for the victim-centred approach. The reception and protection of victims of human trafficking is an essential element of the debate. I would therefore like to stress the importance of ensuring that the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking is properly applied. In our view, punishing victims is a violation of human rights and helps traffickers who can in turn bring more pressure to bear on the victim. The issuing of residence permits to enable victims to recover and to take part in the legal proceedings against their abusers is, in that regard, a key element. Here too we would also be happy to share our experience on that matter.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes today's debate and highlights the importance of sharing perspectives and experiences so as to more

effectively and coherently fight human trafficking in situations of conflict, which increases human vulnerability.

We appreciate the Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939) and his briefing, as well as the briefings by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the Director of the International Organization for Migration Office to the United Nations.

Human trafficking is as complex as the horrors it generates, in which persons, in addition to being coerced into giving up their freedom, are deprived of their dignity, exploited as commodities in prostitution networks, subjected to forced labour or forced to sell their organs to the highest bidder. We have looked on in horror at images of African migrants sold as slaves in Libya.

That is why we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2388 (2017), which my country has had the opportunity to co-sponsor, with a view to responding to this problem in a more efficient, coherent and coordinated manner — in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In that regard, we highlight three elements that we consider of crucial importance.

First is the importance of analysing the increasingly clear and complex nexus between transnational organized crime and situations of conflict, in particular terrorism. Indeed, there is a perverse dynamic in which terrorist groups benefit from lucrative transnational crimes, including human trafficking, which they in turn use to consolidate their power and control over vulnerable groups and individuals.

Second is the almost inherent relation between human trafficking and migrant trafficking. In their search for better living conditions, in many cases generated by humanitarian emergencies, migrants and refugees are often easy targets for criminal networks. In that regard, we stress that neither crime should imply the criminalization of natural migration processes.

Thirdly, we need a targeted approach for the protection of children and women, which includes identifying vulnerabilities with a view to improving prevention mechanisms and caring for victims. A gender perspective should also guide the creation and implementation of relevant laws and measures.

Peru believes that it is imperative to address those three elements through a complete, comprehensive and coordinated strategy to combat this crime. That is why our National Plan against Trafficking in Persons 2017-2021 — the result of an inclusive process of thinking and preparation — takes into account the social, structural and institutional factors that exacerbate the vulnerability of individuals, including insecurity, violence and institutional weakness.

In addition to that, we take into account the transnational scope of the crime of trafficking. We believe firm action by the international community is essential, including active promotion of cooperation at the regional and global levels. The United Nations, in particular through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, should head up such action and make it effective.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Joanne Adamson, Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Ms. Adamson: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

I thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Executive Director Fedotov, Special Rapporteur Giammarinaro and Ambassador Chergui for their briefings.

We would like to commend Italy for convening this debate and for its keen commitment to addressing the issue of trafficking in human beings during conflict. Today's debate and the adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) are an important contribution to the fight against trafficking in conflict situations, building on the momentum created by resolution 2331 (2016). The EU is strongly committed to the implementation of both resolution 2331 (2016) and the resolution adopted today.

Trafficking in human beings is a threat to human and national security alike — a threat to peace, human

rights, democratic governance and the rule of law. Trafficking in the context of conflict takes many forms. We know that vulnerability to trafficking is heightened in the context of conflict and that victims are all too often subjected to horrific crimes of sexual violence. Special attention should be paid to the protection of children, who are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, especially in conflict situations.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict (S/2017/939) pursuant to resolution 2331 (2016). The report highlights the prevalence of the problem in a number of specific conflict situations, but also sets out many positive steps that have been taken by Member States and by United Nations agencies. The EU welcomes those efforts and the recommendations set out in the report. We reiterate our support for the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2017/249), issued in April 2017, including on the need to continue to address the nexus between trafficking in persons and conflict-related sexual violence, including by terrorist groups.

By upholding and promoting international standards, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and other international legal instruments, we contribute to ensuring strong foundations for the rule of law. We must renew and invigorate our efforts to implement the existing legal architecture. The EU has built an ambitious and comprehensive legal and policy framework to combat trafficking in persons. The EU approach is human rights-based, victim-centred, gender-specific and child-sensitive. Anti-trafficking actions also form a key part of our external policies and funding, and we are committed to the comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2, of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In September, the EU and the United Nations launched a new partnership, the Spotlight Initiative, to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, backed by an initial dedicated financial envelope of €500 million. That initiative will focus on all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic exploitation.

We work closely with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Organization for Migration and many other United Nations agencies via joint programmes across the globe, and we will continue our cooperation. We call for greater coherence across the United Nations and stress the role of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons.

There is a market for trafficked human "merchandise," including those trafficked in the context of conflict. We need to investigate, prosecute and convict the perpetrators of those crimes, and we need to put an end their impunity. Prevention must remain central to all actions against trafficking in human beings. Effectively preventing this heinous crime necessitates reducing demand.

The European Commission will shortly publish its priority actions to address trafficking in human beings. They will build on the ongoing work, taking stock of the achievements of the EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012-2016 on ensuring the continuation of efforts, including coordination with stakeholders, on increasing the knowledge base, and on victim protection. Strengthening cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination is paramount to preventing, detecting and addressing this scourge. Our members work with the private sector and on our own public procurement to ensure that supply chains are free of trafficking.

Finally, just as the Security Council has recognized that trafficking can drive conflict, we should also recognize that our efforts to combat trafficking can contribute to peacebuilding and to sustaining peace. As we continue the fight against trafficking in human beings inside the European Union, we will maintain and enhance our cooperation with our international partners with the goal of eradicating trafficking in all countries, including those experiencing conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

Ms. Jarbussynova: I wish to commend the Italian presidency of the Security Council and the speakers who took the floor for keeping all of us focused on this often hidden yet unquestionably despicable offence against human dignity. I also thank the Italian presidency for inviting me to take the floor today.

As the world's largest regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations,

the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) wholeheartedly takes part in fighting human trafficking. In that regard, I echo our strong support to the Secretary General and the whole United Nations system in implementing concrete steps to strengthen the international response to counter the crime in all its forms, wherever it occurs.

It became sadly clear how important it is for the international community to act unanimously on preventing, protecting from and prosecuting human trafficking stemming from conflict around the globe. I will not elaborate further on those loathsome practices, or indeed on how conflict is both the cause and consequence of heightened vulnerability for millions around the world. Rather, I would like to focus on two points.

First, how do we make sure we effectively remedy the risks of trafficking stemming from conflict? How can we foster better synergies to achieve long-lasting results? Secondly, it is imperative that we now adopt a multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral and transnational approach and that we implement it unconditionally. It should be an approach where inclusion, collaboration and sharing of best practices become watchwords in our combined endeavours to ensure more effective investigations, timely prosecutions and prompt identification of victims, especially in countries of destination for victims of trafficking.

Drawing upon almost two years of fact-finding missions in countries most impacted by large migratory flows, my team and I are finalizing a report framing the challenges and opportunities of anti-trafficking responses at first-identification and reception facilities for migrants and refugees in the OSCE region. We are more convinced than ever that the establishment of a multi-agency co-ordination mechanism would ensure sufficient expertise to identify vulnerabilities, facilitate information-sharing on presumed victims of trafficking throughout their journey and guarantee the sustainability of assistance efforts. I commend the Governments of Italy and Greece for their enormous efforts to date and for their readiness to promote more-elaborated anti-trafficking responses.

Yet, we shall not limit our action to the development of policy and legislative frameworks. We need all hands on deck to deliver tangible responses. It thus gives me great pride that my Office so far trained 200 law enforcement officials, prosecutors, labour inspectors, financial investigators and civil society representatives from 40 countries in an intensive, innovative simulation exercise to combat trafficking along migration routes. That endeavour would not have been possible without the engagement and active cooperation of the United Nations family: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, EUROPOL and INTERPOL.

Our aim is for that format to become a role model of international cooperation at its best. We already have plans to translate the material from the simulation exercises — up until now conducted only in English — into Italian, as we are organizing simulation exercises for Italian professionals in Vicenza at the end of January. We are then planning to translate it into Russian so as to engage more professionals from OSCE participating States. I am glad that my country, Kazakhstan, has offered its regional hub on transnational threats to security as a venue for exercises potentially to take place in September. We are also translating the material into French to not only engage OSCE representatives, but also to train representatives from our partner countries from which large migratory flows arrive on the European continent.

Such practical initiatives are not only necessary to foster better synergies; they are critical if we are to achieve long-lasting, concrete results. In terms of the latter, I am pleased with the response of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine to the training offered by myself and my staff on how to monitor and report trafficking-related trends in the context of a conflict situation. I applaud the efforts of UNODC to develop guidelines on trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict situations, and we stand ready to support its regional implementation and evaluation.

We also dwelled on what is often a sophisticated system of recruitment, along with a number of worrying trends, including the steadily increasing numbers of recruits — girls and young women — who join terrorist organizations to serve as wives, the appearance of mixed forms of exploitation within terrorist organizations and the engagement of young male and female high-school graduates for various exploitative purposes.

That information led to the research project that we launched in June 2017 to better understand the links between recruitment, exploitation patterns of

traffickers and terrorist groups. With the overall aim of preventing that new emerging form of human trafficking, that research will detail and discuss real cases of deceitful and forced recruitment for sexual and labour exploitation.

Finally, given that children and unaccompanied minors are particularly vulnerable to violence and exploitation, we made a pledge to help enhance the coherence of international efforts and develop more integrated, effective and expert recommendations to adequately respond to child trafficking in all its forms, in line with the findings of our seventeenth high-level Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons, which took place last April.

I will conclude with a word on the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT). As a platform to promote synergies and advance the global anti-trafficking agenda, I could not be more proud that the OSCE is its first partner member. I call upon Member States, however, to secure the necessary funds and resources to capitalize on its demonstrated potential. To that end, I commend the Government of Belarus for promoting its vital role, and I look forward to the OSCE Ministerial Council this December, where we will jointly discuss ICAT's achievements.

I agree that human trafficking survivors should guide our responses and actions. We cannot turn our backs on the immense injustice and denial of dignity that they face. As such, a human rights-centred approach must remain the overarching principle underpinning all our efforts. Too many human traffickers act with impunity, as low global conviction rates sadly demonstrate. It is high time that they were forced to think twice before acting.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): First of all, I would like to thank Italy for convening this debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for remaining vigilant on this important challenge and the briefers for their detailed accounts concerning the situation on the ground. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Before I start, allow me to express our deep shock and condemnation, as well as condolences, to Nigeria for the cowardly attack on a mosque today. Our prayers and thoughts go to the bereaved families.

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said that our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter. Human trafficking is an offense and a serious threat to human dignity, physical integrity, human rights and sustainable development. Indonesia therefore again reiterates its strongest condemnation of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and calls on all countries to strengthen and enhance their commitment to the global efforts to combat this crime. Sadly, so far, despite our joint efforts to combat that menace, it remains a grave challenge to humankind.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, more than 33,000 people were trafficked in 2016, while the International Labour Organization estimates that 21 million people are victims of forced labour and trafficking globally. Furthermore, as we speak, there are 22.5 million refugees worldwide. We must all work together to ensure their welfare and safety so as to prevent them from becoming victims of human trafficking in any form.

In another part of the globe, news reports show alarming incidences of African migrants in Libya allegedly being sold as slaves. We applaud the Secretary-General's swift response on that issue, and urge the international community to work together in fighting that heinous crime.

At this juncture, allow me to share some of Indonesia's views on this matter.

First, it is critical that we reinforce all the global norms and legal framework that relate to human trafficking. In that regard, we call on countries that have not ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to do so. We should also strengthen efforts to implement all anti-trafficking instruments, including the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons and resolution 2331 (2016).

Furthermore, Indonesia also welcomes, and co-sponsored, the new resolution 2388 (2017) on trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict, which, among other things, is aimed at strengthening detection with a victim-centred approach and a United Nations-coordinated response and contributions of its field missions. We look forward to the implementation of resolution 2388 (2017).

Secondly, we must prioritize efforts to strengthen cross-border collaboration aimed at investigating, disrupting and dismantling human trafficking networks that are profiting from conflict and human suffering. At the regional level, Indonesia, working with other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), stands ready to fully implement the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Indonesia is also committed to implementing the Bali Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime to create safe and orderly migration in the region and to engage the private sector in preventing trafficking in persons. To that end, in August, Indonesia and Australia, as co-Chairs of the Bali process, successfully organized a Government and business forum that provided an avenue of engagement for Governments and businesses in curbing trafficking in persons.

Thirdly, Indonesia advocates greater focus on increasing awareness and response capabilities of peacekeepers through better predeployment training to enable them to respond effectively to victims of trafficking in persons during conflict situations, in accordance with the mandate and basic principles of peacekeeping. We also recognize the increasingly important and positive role of women peacekeepers in responding to women and children who have fallen victims to sex traffickers and exploitation in conflict areas. We are now preparing another 140 women peacekeepers to be deployed. The United Nations and its Member States must therefore do more to further strengthen the role of women in peacekeeping, as clearly outlined in the London communiqué of 2016.

Lastly, peace and development lay the foundations for a stable society and human well-being. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a means for countering instability and the resulting economic desperation, which amplify the risks of conflict and encourage human trafficking. Allow me to conclude by reaffirming Indonesia's unwavering commitment to putting an end to that heinous, centuries-long crime; we must not allow it to exist for another second.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): Let me begin by adding our voice to those expressing their solidarity and condolences to the Government and the people of Nigeria in relation to the recent senseless terrorist attack. Like others, we have been extremely worried about those developments, and we need to continue our joint efforts to address the issue of international terrorism.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, and we would like to share a few additional points in our national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for their briefings. I would also like to extend a special word of thanks to the Italian presidency for convening this important open debate focusing on today's very critical issue. Last but not least, I would also like to thank Council members for adopting resolution 2388 (2017), which helps to sustain the momentum and attention on this important agenda.

Trafficking in persons is one of the worst crimes among the violations of human rights. It violates a person's dignity and undermines his or her basic humanity. That heinous phenomenon has spread worldwide and is present in some form in almost every country in the world — in other words, no one can say that they are immune to that particular scourge.

Human trafficking counts millions of victims and provides enormous profits. Its victims would, in fact, constitute one of the most populous countries in the world, with a population of more than 40 million people. Its revenues are comparable to those of the top 20 companies in the world at $150 billion annually. Those figures clearly show that we are dealing with a phenomenon of massive proportions that really requires concerted efforts from the international community as a whole. Research estimates that we would need to spend only 15 per cent of the profits from modern slavery to completely eradicate that evil practice, a task that could potentially take us two decades. But what we need most are political will and determination translated into concrete action on the ground, as well as further enhanced international cooperation, as I have already mentioned.

Slovakia remains deeply committed to combating human trafficking. After ratifying all of the major international treaties and having implemented the relevant European Union legislation, we have also strengthened our national laws in order to increase

the protection of victims. Our State Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior is the national anti-trafficking coordinator, who covers the national referral mechanism in Slovakia and chairs the expert group on combating trafficking in human beings. We are pursuing the objectives and steps contained in the national action plan for combating human trafficking, which covers the period 2015-2018.

Less than two months ago, we agreed here at the United Nations on the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1). We emphasized the need to address the factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking, particularly poverty, unemployment, inequality and conflicts. In that connection we must focus our efforts on prevention rather than on response. When needed, the protection of victims and prosecution of perpetrators must be timely, accurate and comprehensive.

Raising awareness about the existence of human trafficking reduces the risk of becoming a victim of that scourge. Education, awareness-raising campaigns, events focusing on human trafficking and informing specific groups are but a few of the means of prevention. We have to improve the protection of victims by providing them with special assistance and a professional approach, but we have to work also on their ability to self-identify as victims. Our action against perpetrators must be resolute, coordinated and effective. We have to improve the knowledge of procedures and the methods and forms of detection and prosecution on the national level and enhance international cooperation and joint investigations of transnational organized criminal networks and illicit financial flows.

In conclusion, human trafficking is, as I stated earlier, present in almost every country in the world, and every country in the world must, therefore, do its part to tackle it. It is our view that working individually, but at the same time in a coordinated manner and in close cooperation, is the only way in which we will be able to start referring to human trafficking in the past tense.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I would like to thank the President for placing this issue on the Security Council's agenda today. We have heard impressive statements this morning, including those by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Rapporteur. I also found the statement made by the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Mr. Chergui, very interesting and encouraging, especially in the sense that the African Union takes this challenge very seriously and that they are working very hard on the matter across the African continent, which, as we know from recent reports in Libya, faces many problems relating to human trafficking.

Allow me to make three points. The first is, of course, to support what the Secretary-General said. I think his report (S/2017/939) makes for a very impressive document. I want to highlight his consideration of the issues of impunity and the need to gather evidence from both within and beyond conflict areas so as to pursue perpetrators.

The second point is that we must make trafficking unprofitable. Trafficking is, unfortunately, a highly profitable business. The risk of being caught is not very high, nor is the risk of being put in prison. That is what we need to work on, and so I refer once again to what the Secretary-General underlined in his report: we must devote more attention to the analysis of financial flows. In that context, we note that the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Financial Action Task Force have been carrying out very professional work in following those illicit flows. I also believe that we should profit from the expert recommendations of the OECD. In following money flows, it is important that we, at the same time, uphold the rule of law and find the right balance between effective law enforcement and the protection of the right to privacy.

Next, I wanted to share with the Council the steps taken by the Federal Government. As members knows, we have had a lot of refugees from various backgrounds arrive in Germany over recent years. The first step is to identify the victims and provide services so as to give them direct psychological support and assistance when they are in refugee shelters.

With regard to the psychological work that has to be done, the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings has provided a lot of advice, and we should give our support to the draft report that it is still preparing. As mentioned earlier on the subject of impunity, we have to look at law enforcement. Within the crime of

trafficking, there are those who are responsible for the direct exploitation of people in need, such as refugees, and those people who knowingly and willingly take advantage of persons being trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation. Since 2016, we have had a new provision in the German Penal Code, under which such people — the indirect benefiters of trafficking — are punished. It is important that people benefiting from trafficking be criminalized.

The Slovak representative, speaking just before me, mentioned that we have to get business and enterprises engaged. On the subject of labour exploitation, the German Government included a provision in its 2016 national action plan on business and human rights, under which international companies are made responsible for ensuring that decent labour conditions are implemented in their supply chains. It is important, therefore, that we focus on the victims, law enforcement and companies.

We have received various impressions from the pictures that have come in from Libya. Last year, the Chancellor received Nadia Murad, a Yazidi, as the Council knows, and Germany among other countries had an exhibition in this Chamber on the plight of the Yazidis. It is always good to follow up on what has happened to witnesses, and Nadia Murad is an example of someone who has contributed to keeping our response to the Yazidi situation alive. Germany hopes that today's debate and resolution will lead to an improvement in that situation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to extend our heartfelt sympathies and deepest condolences to the people and Governments of Nigeria and Iraq for the dastardly terrorist attacks that have taken place in those countries today. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of those terrorist attacks.

We thank Italy for organizing today's debate and the briefers for their interventions. We appreciate the attention that the Security Council has devoted to the issue of trafficking in persons over recent years.

Turkey welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2388 (2017). We consider the implementation of resolution 2331 (2016) to be very important in advancing the normative agenda set out by the Security Council. We are pleased to see that today's resolution once again recognizes that trafficking in persons entails grave violations of human rights and strongly condemns all instances of trafficking in persons.

As an offence against the dignity and integrity of human beings, trafficking in persons also constitutes a serious transnational organized crime. The recent unspeakable pictures of the slave trade are a case in point. In situations of conflict and complex emergencies, human trafficking can drive conflict, finance terrorist organizations and amplify the risks for the most vulnerable, namely, women and children. The Secretary-General's report (S/2017/939), as well as the recent studies by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, demonstrate that situations of conflict pose various sorts of challenges to efforts to counter trafficking in persons.

I should also note that trafficking is a global problem that requires global responses. Therefore, in preventing and countering trafficking in persons, we should always address the four pillars of prevention, prosecution, protection and partnerships. In addition, the international community has to continue developing inclusive, human rights-based and victim-centred approaches, including legislative and criminal measures. Such measures should be informed, first and foremost, by the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Owing to its geographical location, Turkey has been adversely affected by the rising trends in human trafficking and related malpractices. During this time of crisis in our region, criminal and terrorist networks resort to various forms of exploiting human beings, commit gender-based sexual violence and force the recruitment of adults and children in order to fund and sustain their criminal operations.

The Secretary-General's report explains how Da'esh, the Lord's Resistance Army, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab resort to human trafficking for the purposes of forced labour, slavery, abuse against minors and sexual exploitation. Such tactics are, sadly, not limited to those terrorist groups. It is important to emphasize that terrorist organizations such as the Kurdish Workers Party and the Democratic Union Party of Syria also widely employ such methods aimed in order to exploit human beings, in particular, through the forced recruitment of children and young women.

Turkey is actively fighting against the terrorist organizations in its region. We also support our partners in their efforts. In doing that, we are of the view that investigating, disrupting and dismantling criminal networks operating in the context of armed conflicts can serve as a contributing factor for sustaining peace. We also recognize the need to address the vulnerabilities of victims trapped in conflicts and to ensure accountability for perpetrators of trafficking.

Turkey remains strongly committed to eradicating human trafficking by implementing a progressive approach. With that understanding, we have introduced comprehensive administrative and legal measures aimed at combating that phenomenon. At the domestic level, our efforts have been focused on strengthening our legislation and improving the implementation of our obligations. In that regard, a Coordination Commission against human trafficking has been established. The Commission will put into practice an updated national action plan on the fight against human trafficking in the coming period. Moreover, the regulation on combating human trafficking and the protection of victims has been issued and put in force last year. Through those steps, we are making further strides towards better identification of victims and ensuring adequate protection for them.

At the international level, Turkey is a party to the Palermo Convention and its relevant supplementary protocols. As to efforts the regional level, Turkey put into force the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings in February 2016.

Human trafficking can be prevented if we recalibrate and coordinate our ongoing efforts, in line with the commitments agreed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the World Humanitarian Summit, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and most recently through the Political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. Strengthening the role of the United Nations system, including through today's resolution, will assist the entire Council in achieving our common objectives.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The Secretary-General's first report on the issue of trafficking in persons in armed conflict (S/2017/939), drafted pursuant to resolution 2331 (2016), provides an excellent point of reference for considering the activities undertaken by the United Nations agencies in that regard. It also offers an insight into the best practices developed by Member States. It is encouraging to see that several issues have been acted on that were discussed and recommended at the Council's previous open debate in 2016 (see S/PV.7898). Nevertheless, the report once again shows the scale of the repercussions on peace and security — including human security — resulting from trafficking in persons. For that reason, Switzerland thanks the Italian presidency for organizing this open debate on trafficking in persons in armed conflict and for submitting today's timely resolution 2388 (2017), which addresses, inter alia, the particular vulnerability of children in conflict situations.

Trafficking in persons can be a consequence of crisis and armed conflict. Migration and forced displacement, including internal displacement, increase the risk of trafficking and exploitation. The problems that arise as a consequence affect all countries along the migration routes. While the absence of peace and security favours the business model of traffickers — as is clearly the case in Libya — countries at peace and with a strong rule of law are by no means exempt from the scourge.

That is why Switzerland is working on strengthening measures to identify and protect persons in the asylum procedure. The revised national action plan to fight human trafficking 2017-2020 establishes a number of actions in that regard. One such initiative is the systematic training of front-line workers in asylum reception centres. The action plan also puts a special focus on unaccompanied minors in the context of trafficking. The recent UNICEF-International Organization for Migration report on children and youth on the move across the Mediterranean Sea presents facts and figures that confirm the need for prevention and protection measures for that group, in particular unaccompanied minors, who are not only particularly vulnerable to trafficking, but are also disproportionally represented among the people on the move.

We also welcome the references in the Secretary-General's report to the value of regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE is contributing effectively, through its action plan on combating trafficking in human beings, to the development of an operational response and a counter-trafficking policy covering

every dimension of the trafficking phenomenon, particularly in conflict and post-conflict environments.

Let me also highlight the importance of fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms in fighting the impunity of those involved in human trafficking. Such mechanisms allow us to build an important knowledge base on that phenomenon and contribute to strengthening accountability for that crime. Human trafficking is a crime that goes beyond national borders. In the light of that, the fight against that phenomenon is the fundamental duty of all States. Switzerland will persevere in its efforts to combat that scourge, both as a cause and a consequence of armed conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your country for assuming the presidency of the Council for this month and wish you all the best in the stewardship of the work of the Council. You can rest assured of South Africa's continued support for and cooperation with the work of the Council.

We consider this debate very timely, as it is an important follow-up to the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016) and provides an opportunity to evaluate our collective response aimed at ensuring that women, children, refugees, migrants and internally displaced peoples are protected from trafficking.

It is inexcusable that in this day and age, and in almost every conflict situation throughout the world, human trafficking thrives. It has been established that the illicit trafficking of drugs, stolen antiquities and small arms and light weapons often follow the same routes used by human traffickers. Those activities threaten international peace and security, for instance by sustaining terrorism, criminals and armed groups.

The appalling reports over the past few days showing that African migrants in Libya are being sold as slaves is a clear indication of the urgent need for all of us to commit to the eradication of that scourge. As the Secretary-General said in his statement earlier in the meeting, slavery has no place in our world and these actions are among the most egregious abuses of human rights and may amount to crimes against humanity.

My delegation is mindful of the fact that one of the highest risks to displaced persons — specifically refugees fleeing conflicts — is the threat of being trafficked. Trafficking operations often flourish in circumstances where Government institutions and law enforcement capacities have been eroded and weakened by sustained conflict. That undermines the rule of law, which in turn contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, exacerbating conflict and insecurity.

Our ultimate objective should be to address the conflict that has given rise to the scourge of human trafficking, including its root causes. That requires us to address development challenges and the dangers of external interventions that we have witnessed in Libya, Iraq and Syria, which have led to the proliferation of refugees and internally displaced persons.

It is also imperative that we work together to address underdevelopment, which lies at the root cause of migration. That is manifested through poverty, joblessness, inequality, conflict and trafficking in persons, factors that force people to migrate beyond their borders seeking better opportunities. In that regard, South Africa stresses that issues related to trafficking are not just an issue for the Security Council to deal with; all related organs of this Organization ought to work in concert to address the matter collaboratively, so as to strengthen development and thereby sustainable and durable peace.

The United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons provides a robust framework for addressing trafficking in persons. However, it remains imperative that international instruments are properly supported by tangible actions and political commitments at the international, regional and national levels in order for them to fulfil their respective mandates effectively.

Although human trafficking remains a significant international challenge, we are encouraged by the findings of the 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, which shows that many countries have criminalized trafficking, as required by the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. We note that the number of countries that have done so increased from 33 in 2003 to 158 in 2016. That impressive increase has contributed to a commensurate increase in the number of prosecutions and, importantly, to the provision of more assistance to victims.

No single country can solve the problem alone. The transnational nature of trafficking demands a transnational response. It is critical that we strengthen

and expand partnerships among stakeholders, including civil society, academia and the private sector, in supporting prevention, protection, and prosecution efforts. It is also important to deepen cooperation with the private sector in order to ensure that trafficking is eradicated within global supply chains.

We also need to further strengthen efforts to build the capacity of our front-line actors, including criminal-justice system officials, social-service providers, medical personnel, and law-enforcement and border authorities in order to deal effectively with that scourge. Particular attention should be given to gender and age issues, exploitation and abuse in the context of trafficking, smuggling and the contemporary forms of slavery. We must also strengthen our capability to prosecute such crimes through the provision of technical assistance in areas such as international law and practice, intelligence gathering, risk analysis, investigative skills and interviewing the suspects and victims.

In addition, we need to work to improve the collection, sharing and analysis of data, including data on the modus operandi and the economic models and conditions that drive smuggling and trafficking networks. Effective short- to medium-term strategies, including awareness-raising campaigns and education and training initiatives, are needed. In that regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is to be commended for its efforts to assist States to improve such capabilities.

In conclusion, we welcome this opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the efforts to address trafficking in persons in conflict situations, including through resolution 2331 (2016). We are confident that this review will assist the international community in achieving its ultimate goal of eradicating this terrible crime.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Kassas (Holy See) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Holy See thanks the Italian presidency for convening today's debate and for keeping the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict situations high on the Security Council's agenda.

Resolution 2331 (2016), which was adopted a year after the landmark presidential statement contained in document S/PRST/2015/25, issued at the Council's first-ever meeting on trafficking in persons (see S/PV.7585), refers to a correlation between trafficking in persons, sexual violence, armed conflict, terrorism and transnational organized crime. The Council has underscored that acts or offences associated with trafficking in persons in conflict may constitute war crimes.

However, the full potential of international criminal justice needs to be utilized exhaustively if we are to be effective in our fight against that heinous crime. In order to eradicate trafficking in persons, we must confront all of its economic, environmental, political and ethical causes, and it is particularly important to prevent and end the wars and conflicts that make people especially vulnerable to being trafficked.

Wars and violent conflicts have become the biggest driving force behind forced human displacement. The state of war provides an enabling environment for human traffickers, who increasingly exploit a tragic humanitarian situation to target refugees, forced migrants and internally displaced persons in their criminal enterprises. In that regard, the Holy See would like to highlight the importance of the implementation of the responsibility to protect in the context of the migration and refugee crises, which facilitate trafficking in persons.

When States and the international community fail to protect people from war and atrocities to such an extent that people feel compelled to flee their homes, we all have a great and urgent responsibility to protect them from further harm, including from falling into the hands of human traffickers. The criminalization of forced migrants and undocumented and irregular migrants in general exacerbates their vulnerabilities, drives them further into the clutches of traffickers and other extreme forms of exploitation, and renders them less likely to collaborate with law-enforcement authorities in efforts to catch and punish traffickers.

Achieving the specific targets of the Sustainable Development Goals aimed at ending trafficking in persons is an integral part of our efforts. Like the Sustainable Development agenda as a whole, those targets present immense challenges that no individual, organization or State can deal with alone. Despite significant progress and efforts, such as the high-level meeting on the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, held on 27 and 28 September, much more still needs to be done to

achieve better coordination among Governments, the judiciary, law-enforcement officials and civil society.

Likewise, leaders and followers of the various religions around the world must do everything in their power to save the millions of children, women and men who are forced to live in slave-like conditions. In that context, my delegation wishes to thank all faith-based organizations and religious communities, in particular women's organizations, which have long been at the forefront of the fight against trafficking in persons and have shown their commitment by accompanying survivors with loving concern on the long journey back to living a life in freedom and dignity.

On the World Day against Trafficking in Persons this July, Pope Francis warned us all against getting used to trafficking in persons or treating it as if it were a normal thing, when in reality it is, as he said, ugly, cruel, criminal, an aberrant plague, a modern form of slavery and a crime against humanity. In his name, my delegation renews the appeal for a universal commitment to ending that heinous crime.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Ansari (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for presiding over the Security Council for this month and thank you for organizing today's important debate on a matter that concerns basic human rights.

Unfortunately, trafficking in persons has become a global phenomenon, especially in countries suffering from conflicts. I would also like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres; Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, for their valuable briefings.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939) on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2331 (2016) includes important information and recommendations that we, as members of the international community, must take into account in our efforts aimed at combating the phenomenon of human trafficking, especially in countries and regions in conflict. The indicators in the report show an increasing number of victims of that heinous crime, especially women and children. We must therefore intensify our efforts to meet the obligation set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development not to leave anyone behind.

As stated in the report of the Secretary-General, the phenomenon of trafficking in persons has become increasingly more dangerous, owing to the fact that terrorist groups are using young victims to perpetrate terrorist acts and are diverting the proceeds of trafficking to finance such acts. The State of Qatar is committed to international law and believes in the importance of enhancing and protecting human rights and upholding human dignity. We continue to contribute to international efforts aimed at combating that heinous phenomenon.

The State of Qatar focuses its efforts on addressing the root causes of human trafficking, whether they be social, economic, cultural, political or ideological, or the result of the absence of the rule of law. The State of Qatar is also working on enhancing the complementarity and cooperation among concerned entities working on drafting and implementing national plans and strategies to combat terrorism and corruption, provide humanitarian relief, and combat and eradicate human trafficking at the national, regional and international levels.

At the national level, the State of Qatar has implemented a number of legislative and executive measures that criminalize human trafficking in all its various forms, punish perpetrators and provide protection, rehabilitation and reintegration into society for its victims. We have established a national committee on combating human trafficking to coordinate the efforts of State institutions and civil society aimed at dealing with that horrific phenomenon. At the regional level, we have supported the Arab initiative to build national capacity in combating human trafficking in Arab States in cooperation with the UNODC and the League of Arab States. At the international level, the State of Qatar contributes effectively to the efforts of the Group of Friends United to Combat Human Trafficking.

The State of Qatar has been one of the largest donors to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, since the Fund's establishment. We are also one of the biggest supporters of UNODC, which is the United Nations focal point for combating the crime of human trafficking. In addition, in 2015, we hosted

the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, where a comprehensive approach to fighting human trafficking, based in part on the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, was adopted in accordance with the Doha Declaration. We also recently facilitated negotiations, together with Belgium, on the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1), adopted on 27 September at the tigh-level meeting of the General Assembly on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm that the international community continues to be unable to reach fair settlements to conflicts, which contributes to exacerbating the phenomenon of human trafficking. We must put an end to that crime through concerted efforts and by addressing the root causes of human trafficking and armed conflict. We will make every effort to assist the international community and the Security Council in eradicating human trafficking and providing peace, security and welfare to all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for your efforts at the helm of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank you for having convened this important debate. I thank Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for his briefing and for his report on today's agenda item (S/2017/939) and its recommendations. We also thank Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, as well as all of this morning's briefers.

One year has passed since we adopted resolution 2331 (2016), in which we vehemently condemned instances of human trafficking in armed conflict, and yet we continue to be confronted with that alarming phenomenon, specifically after seeing the revolting images shown by the media recently. Those images showed trafficking in persons in Libya. Human beings were sold like merchandise, despite the international community's efforts to combat terrorism and the barbaric ideas of terrorist organizations. The conflicts plaguing our world today, as well as unprecedented waves of refugees, have contributed to that phenomenon, which is rising to a crescendo.

The 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows an increase in the number of victims in countries plagued by conflict, such as Syria, Iraq and Somalia, but also in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. For that reason, we emphasize the importance of arriving at political solutions to the crises facing us so that we can put an end to violence and bloodshed and safeguard the dignity of people. It is also our duty, as the international community, to maintain a holistic vision of those issues. We must not focus solely on the hot spots. We must have a comprehensive overview of all parts of the world. We need programmes providing interregional responses aimed at combating such phenomena and the underlying causes thereof. For that reason, Jordan will continue to work at the United Nations with our various partners to achieve that goal.

We also need a holistic approach to the issue, not merely a political one. We must take into account security and human-development issues and we must link them to our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the sustaining peace agenda in order to achieve a peaceful world in which societies are fair and nobody is left behind. Our societies must be prosperous and should provide freedoms for all. All people must be able to live without the fear of violence.

In our view, it is critical to redouble our efforts to fight human trafficking, specifically trafficking perpetrated by terrorist groups. For that reason, we must work nationally, regionally and internationally to fight terrorism and extremist thought by prioritizing women, girls and children, who remain the weak links in the chain. We must also empower young people and build capacity through technical assistance to all countries in need. That must be part of a global preventive strategy. In that regard, we underscore the fundamental link between trafficking in persons and the crises afflicting our societies, specifically the phenomena of terrorism and extremism. We need to a comprehensive understanding of that link. We must analyse all its dimensions and implement strategies and programmes to combat that scourge.

To that end, Jordan and Norway created the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism in New York, which comprises some 40 countries. We are

striving to ensure empowerment for young people and women in the fight against violent extremism. In particular, we are striving to build the capacities of women at the international level so as to ensure conflict prevention and effectively respond to urgent crises in order to build a lasting peace where all people can work and live in prosperity.

We also emphasize the importance of stepping up cooperation in the exchange of information and capacity-building between States and international organizations, together with the UNODC, which plays a critical role in the fight against the scourges we have been discussing. Treatment and recovery for victims must also be ensured, and I would like to emphasize the role of women and children in that process.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan lauds the Political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and it emphasizes the importance of General Assembly resolution 64/293, adopted in 2010. That resolution is a testament to the robust political will of the international community to fight such heinous crimes. We also emphasize the importance of the recommendations contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939) and its analysis of the control of illicit financial flows as a means of fighting trafficking in persons.

Jordanian law has criminalized all types of human trafficking. We have also ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We have also criminalized forced labour, modern slavery and trafficking in persons through our Anti-human Trafficking Law No. 9 of 2009.

We have created a national commission tasked with fighting human trafficking. The commission brings together representatives from various ministries and governmental and non-governmental bodies. We have also set up a national strategy for the prosecution of and fight against trafficking in persons for the period 2010 to 2012. We are currently working on follow-up measures to that strategy. We have created hot lines for victims to report instances of human trafficking. We have also set up a mechanism to refer instances of human trafficking to the competent authorities and to law enforcement, hospitals and various treatment centres. We have also set up a national strategy, with a mandate through 2025. It brings together the various aspects of the 2030 Agenda, and it addresses violence against children and sexual exploitation linked to human trafficking.

We have also set up an entity called the Home of Dignity, which is an organization linked to the Ministry of Social Development. It enables assistance to be delivered to human trafficking victims of all nationalities. Other relevant authorities also strive to deliver all necessary assistance to victims, in particular the children of Syrian refugees. We enable those children to have access to high-quality education through assistance provided by UNICEF. We have also established a fund to combat violence against women of Jordan and of other countries.

Finally, Jordan will continue to step up its efforts to combat the phenomenon of human trafficking, in particular crimes perpetrated by terrorist organizations. We stand ready to cooperate with various regional and international bodies to raise awareness among all of such phenomena and to fight against those scourges.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mrs. Furman (Israel): I would like to start by commending Italy for holding this debate and for the adoption today of the important resolution 2388 (2017), which Israel is proud to cosponsor.

Human trafficking is a crime by humankind against humanity. It debases our fellow human beings and erodes societies. It is a multibillion-dollar industry of lies that can manipulate anyone in its path. It leaves people trapped and alone. Trafficking in persons takes many forms but has most recently become a preferred tool of terror for non-State actors. Terrorists target the world's most vulnerable people, using trafficking to exploit innocent civilians, trapped in the crossfire of brutal armed conflict. And the situation is only getting worse.

Today, we must remind ourselves of the humanity of the problem — the names, the faces and the stories of the victims of human trafficking. Adnan Ali had to choose between joining the Houthi rebels on the front lines in Yemen and selling his organs. He chose to sell his kidney. Zara was kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria. She was forced to become a prostitute to

survive. Haifa, a Yazidi woman from Iraq, was sold into sex slavery by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham. She was one of thousands of women whose bodies became commodities for terrorists to trade and from which to make money.

Too many innocent people die as a result of trafficking. The ones who survive, those who manage to escape, are forced to live with the physical and emotional scars of abuse. The fundamental freedoms of the trafficking of victims, too many of whom are women and children, are compromised eternally.

No human life can ever be up for sale. No person's identity can be stripped away by someone else. As stated in the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1), adopted in September, we cannot reach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals if we do not end human trafficking. Every country must do its part to end that barbarism.

Fighting human trafficking is a high priority for Israel. We faced a serious trafficking problem throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s. So, in 2006 we introduced a comprehensive anti-trafficking law and adopted national plans of action. Israel is a party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and is fully committed to the four Ps: prevention, prosecution, protection and partnership. It is our goal to make every Government official, student, business executive, police officer and ordinary citizen aware of trafficking and of its victims.

To do that, we start by appointing anti-trafficking coordinators to Government agencies. Then we focus on training. Israel's National Anti-Trafficking Unit holds over 50 training sessions for officials annually. Lawyers in the State Attorney's Office receive special training to enhance the law enforcement element of anti-trafficking. For the general public, we offer lectures, seminars and interviews with survivors at universities and through the media. We also distribute leaflets that provide information to raise awareness among our citizens and work hard to reduce the stigma that can accompany human trafficking and further isolate its victims.

On the international level, Israel partners with other countries to combat trafficking on a global scale. In Israel, we have hosted delegations from Albania, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the European Union, to name but a few, for training and consultations. Our national coordinator participates in the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna. Israel is proud to partner in the global effort to end human trafficking.

Israel has not been spared from the cruelty of human trafficking, but we are doing our best to combat it on all fronts. We are proud to be considered a tier-1 country by the United States Department of State on account of our comprehensive anti-trafficking training measures and services for victims since the early 2000s. Our shelters are Government-funded and legal aid is free. We offer work visas and medical and psychological support. We work closely with civil society and strongly support our partner non-governmental organizations, which are invaluable in the fight against trafficking. Ultimately, our goal is to provide rehabilitation, recovery and reintegration for every victim of trafficking who walks through our doors.

Israel is ready to share its best practices with the world. We are eager to hear the world's best practices as well. If we shy away from cooperation and from sharing our knowledge, we move only further away from defeating human trafficking. Let us work together, share our knowledge and end this terrible practice for good.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Ms. Navarro (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to commend the initiative of the Italian presidency of the Security Council to convene this timely open debate. We also appreciate the initial contributions of the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children, which make clear the current situation of a scourge that does not recognize borders and that, regrettably, with its various faces and manifestations, affects all our countries.

Panama has participated in the past three debates of the Security Council on this issue because it understands that collective responsibility is required to address a global phenomenon, which, together with all the related factors, jeopardizes the integrity, security, stability and economic, social and cultural development of our peoples.

Clearly, resolution 2331 (2016), adopted unanimously by the Council almost a year ago, further underscored the intention of States to address any form of trafficking in human beings in conflict areas, understanding that that degrading practice constitutes a violation of the human rights of the victims. It undermines their human condition for the benefit of criminal networks.

We have taken due note of the observations and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939) on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to resolution 2331 (2016) . We would underscore our clear concern over the need to focus analysis on the close links between the trafficking of children in conflict situations and the serious violations facing them. We therefore commend the Security Council for taking action in that regard. Panama echoes the strong condemnation of the Secretary-General yesterday following news reports that revealed the existence of slave markets in Libya, where the degrading auction of migrants and refugees is a shocking reality.

In the current context, in which conflicts generate mass migration flows, and as we work towards the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, international cooperation efforts must address that serious issue through the holistic and fully unified approach that it demands of us by focusing on its causes.

For Panama, preventing and combating trafficking in persons is a priority of the citizen security strategy, designed to safeguard the human rights of all individuals and, at the same time, to protect the network of services of our country from actions of organized crime in order to prevent those services from being used for illicit activities, such as financing terrorism. In line with the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, adopted in 2010, Panama has implemented a set of specific actions to prevent human trafficking, prosecute traffickers, protect victims and establish partnerships to mobilize resources for cooperation. In terms of data collection, our biometric database made it possible to prevent people with links to criminal networks from entering the country or avoiding migratory controls.

As a country of transit and destination for migrants, Panama has acted responsibly by enacting up-to-date legislation to address the phenomenon and its related activities, and is committed to the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially in Women and Children; its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol of 2014 to the Convention Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour.

We are pleased to be a member of the regional coalition against human trafficking and to hold the vice-presidency of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which is represented by our Minister of Public Security, as we confidently rely on regional actions with global reach.

Panama also recognizes the value of joint initiatives with international organizations. That is why the efforts of our national commission against trafficking in persons, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Organization for Migration, to strengthen mutual legal assistance mechanisms in the exchange of information that facilitates the investigation and prosecution of the crime of trafficking in persons has yielded significant results. This confirms our belief that action cannot be undertaken in isolation. We therefore welcome the agreement that has been signed with UNODC for the construction in Panama of the first shelter for victims of trafficking in the region, which will meet the highest relevant international standards.

I conclude by once again renewing the strong commitment of Panama to fighting against this form of modern slavery, without ignoring the value of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as we see that the link between sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights as a means to confront the asymmetrical structural factors that fuel this scourge.

Mr. Hattrem (Norway): I have the honour of making this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

Trafficking in persons, including forced labour and slavery, is a serious form of organized crime and a grave violation of human rights. For the perpetrators, trafficking is an enormously lucrative business. These criminal networks exploit displaced persons and are a factor that causes people to migrate. Terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko

Haram, Al-Shabaab and the Lord's Resistance Army are using trafficking as a tactic of terror and war. Moreover, trafficking raises money for their operations and criminal infrastructure. Women and children are particularly exposed, often in the form of sexual slavery or forced labour, or as soldiers, spies or infiltrators. In that regard, we welcome the adoption last week, at the margins of the United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference in Canada, of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers. We call on parties to conflicts to take concrete action to address such violations and abuses and to protect the victims.

We need to develop combined tools from the security and development communities to address the convergence of armed conflict, terrorism and trafficking in persons. Therefore, we welcome resolution 2331 (2016). We need better and more effective utilization of international organizations and instruments. That includes the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which are important to ensure effective international cooperation across borders and regions, as well as between countries' law enforcement authorities.

In that regard, we welcome the capacity-building activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Furthermore, we need to improve conflict analysis, conflict prevention and cooperation through data-sharing and monitoring between countries and across United Nations entities. We welcome Secretary-General Guterres' initiative to strengthen the conflict and threat analysis of the United Nations. In addition, we need to improve our ability to trace trafficking networks and related financial flows and give priority to the development of financial disruption strategies and operations.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development gives us an important platform on which to tackle trafficking in a more holistic manner. In line with resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2250 (2015), we also need to engage more women and young people in both peacebuilding activities and actions against human trafficking.

We support the Secretary-General's reform agenda and would like to underline that the peace, security and development architecture needs to be coherent and mutually supportive in that regard. The Nordic countries are strongly committed to tackling all forms of trafficking and organized crime. We are already deeply engaged in anti-trafficking programmes, in partnership with developing countries, regional organizations and the United Nations. Strengthening multilateral cooperation and partnerships is more important than ever.

Mr. El Khadir (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me thank the Italian presidency of the Security Council for the month of November, for convening today's open debate and for its choice of the theme "Trafficking in persons in conflict situations".

Today's meeting takes place in a context characterized by mass displacements of people, particularly refugees. Fleeing wars and natural disasters, migrants aspire for better futures. Due to their vulnerability, migrants are exposed to the risk of trafficking. We are convinced that today's debate and resolution 2388 (2017), adopted today, will strengthen the international community's resolve to prevent and combat all forms of trafficking in persons.

As one of the three elements of Morocco's new migration policy, adopted in September 2013, the fight against trafficking in persons is a priority with respect to upholding human rights and fighting organized crime. Thanks to our national migration and asylum policy, Morocco has positioned itself at the forefront of our region in the fight against trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The first stage of our policy has led to the regularization of the status of approximately 25,000 migrants. The second stage will capitalize on the success and gains realized during the first stage, and will help to continue to facilitate the integration of migrants as part of an integrated humane approach to sheltering migrants from human trafficking networks and ensuring that the rights of refugees and migrants are upheld on our territory.

Morocco has adopted a series of measures at the national level by updating its legal and institutional frameworks with respect to migration, asylum and human trafficking. Adopted in 2016, our law against human trafficking is further testament to the Kingdom's active commitment. My country has also demonstrated its commitment at the international level by adhering to the main human rights conventions related to the prevention of and fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, including the United

Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which we ratified in April 2011. Furthermore, at the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Morocco presented its six-month action plan for the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. We are among the 13 countries that were strategically selected throughout the world to develop and implement national plans to fight smuggling and illicit trafficking in persons.

Extreme poverty, inequality, conflict, political and economic instability, human rights violations and the lack of education and prospects create vulnerabilities that criminals exploit. No country can resolve the issue of trafficking alone. The solution cannot rely solely on a security-based approach. It requires a comprehensive and multisectoral approach and close cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination to tackle the root causes of people falling victim to trafficking networks. A preventive approach to trafficking is intrinsically linked to our shared goal of sustainable development.

In that regard, Morocco reiterates its full commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda. The Kingdom of Morocco takes this opportunity to emphasize the historic opportunity represented by the convening of the international conference on migration to be held on 10 and 11 September 2018 in the Kingdom of Morocco with a view to contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

To conclude, I would like to stress the following points. An effective response to human trafficking cannot be solely limited to criminal prosecution. There must be measures in place to prevent people from falling victim to it. The fight against human trafficking hinges on the establishment of a stable political context conducive to an effective campaign against trafficking in persons through, inter alia, the promotion of and respect for human rights, democracy, good governance, the fight against corruption and impunity, a reduction of social fragility, sustainable development and inclusive growth. Lastly, we must ensure that people residing in refugee camps are registered as a way to fight the threat of human trafficking and to identify instances of trafficking and potential victims.

Mr. Elnour (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking the delegation of Italy for convening this important open debate and for its efforts resulting in our adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) this morning. In that regard, I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, as well as Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children; and Mr. Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, for their briefings before the Council this morning.

I also like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the readiness of my delegation to cooperate with the Council towards the fulfilment of our commitments under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and to put an end to such heinous crimes.

The heinous images and recent news of African refugee victims make a clear statement about a horrific crime that should be uprooted by the international community. I would like to take this opportunity to assure those present of the support of my country for the call made by the head of the African Union to undertake a neutral and immediate investigation of that atrocious event.

I would like to reassure members of the Council of the support of the Sudan for all other international efforts related to human trafficking, given the threat it poses to international peace and security. As we are all aware, the number of victims of that phenomenon is on the rise. Many criminal networks are profiting from and exploiting humanitarian crises to implement their criminal schemes, making use of vulnerable environments that give rise to conflict. Those networks also exploit vulnerable groups, especially women and children, to serve their own purposes, such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, organ trafficking, servitude and all other heinous crimes, as reiterated in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939) on trafficking in persons in armed conflict.

We confirm that combating all forms of transnational crime, which is used by human trafficking groups, requires international, regional and bilateral cooperation, especially in terms of exchanging information and monitoring suspect financial flows, as

well as building the capacities of individual countries to address such crimes. In that vein, we must not neglect the economic, development and social dimensions in addressing the root causes of the crime, namely, poverty. This will further require that we adopt an integrated approach that includes international and regional partnerships and the measures necessary to prosecute and punish human traffickers and protect victims, in addition to providing them with psychological and health-care services.

The unprecedented massive movements of refugees and migrants from neighbouring countries transiting my country have led to enormous challenges and developments that the Sudan has had to address, including mixed migration flows, illegal immigration and refugees fleeing the countryside to cities. Such incessant demographic mobility includes the smuggling of women and children. We are sparing no effort to combat human trafficking and transnational organized crime, in accordance with our international and regional commitments. In that regard, we recall certain achievements that we have accomplished in the Sudan.

First, we enacted an anti-human trafficking law in October 2014, and established a national committee to combat human smuggling and trafficking. Upon the law's enforcement, police forces were able to liberate thousands of victims of smuggling, especially women and children, on their way to Libya, and thence to Europe as the final destination.

Secondly, we amended the refugee law of 1974 in 2014 so as to align it with regional and international developments, including with new provisions regarding human trafficking. Thirdly, we amended our passport law in line with current challenges.

Fourthly, in October 2014 the Regional Ministerial Conference on Human Trafficking and Smuggling in the Horn of Africa was held in Khartoum in conjunction with the African Union and the European Union, as well as other international partners and neighbouring countries, including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt and South Sudan. The outcome of the Conference is known as the Khartoum process. That was followed by a conference in Rome. In that regard, we urge the international community to seriously honour its pledges and commitments of the Khartoum process.

Fifthly, the Government of the Sudan has signed a number of conventions and agreements with neighbouring countries for border control. There is a tripartite agreement among the refugee commission, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organization for Migration to combat the crime of human trafficking, especially in eastern Sudan where most of the victims of that crime reside.

Sixthly, the Government of the Sudan set up shelters for the protection of victims and is currently in the process of providing them with psychological and healthcare services in order to integrate them into society. In that vein, we are developing mechanisms for documenting and verifying the identity of the victims and for prosecuting the perpetrators this heinous crime. In addition to and in recognition of the positive efforts to control their borders, the countries of the region agreed that Khartoum would host the regional centre for anti-human trafficking processes.

In conclusion, my country's delegation would like to reiterate its determination to continue its cooperation with the international community and the United Nations and its agencies in order to address the human trafficking phenomenon. In that regard, we urge the international community to provide technical support to the competent authorities in the Sudan. We also call for this crime to be addressed in an integral and comprehensive manner, encompassing the development of measures to uproot it. In the same vein, we must raise awareness about the victims and their human rights.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): At the outset, Austria warmly welcomes today's adoption of resolution 2388 (2017), which we gladly co-sponsored.

Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the observer of the European Union.

Conflict and post-conflict settings often create conditions where civilians are increasingly exposed to the risk of becoming the victims of trafficking. We would like to highlight three issues in that regard.

First, with regard to persons belonging to vulnerable groups, in situations of conflict women and girls are far too often sexually exploited, forced into marriage and abused for domestic work. Terrorists capture women and girls, sell them or offer them as rewards to the fighters of terrorist organizations. Similarly, children are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking in conflict settings. Thousands of them have been recruited by armed groups and used

as child soldiers, human shields or suicide bombers. Furthermore, unaccompanied children on the move are particularly at risk. In armed conflict, trafficking in persons is also used as a strategy to target ethnic and religious minorities. Through its General Assembly resolution presented again this year, Austria continues to advocate for the protection of persons belonging to minorities and for their rights.

Secondly, to combat trafficking in persons, Austria follows a victim-centered approach based on rights and the rule of law. Therefore, we put the focus on preventing trafficking in persons, identifying and protecting the victims of trafficking and other serious forms of exploitation. Bringing the perpetrators to justice and ending the climate of impunity is of utmost importance. In post-conflict settings, accountability and transitional justice mechanisms, including at the international level, are key elements in sustaining peace.

In view of the transnational nature of the offence, we would like to stress the need for the closest possible cooperation among all relevant stakeholders, at national and international level. While the work of international organizations remains key in the fight against human trafficking, we would also like to again highlight the indispensable role of non-governmental organizations and civil society, in particular with regard to providing valuable assistance in enhancing the identification, care and referral of victims. We must therefore continue to pursue an inclusive, comprehensive approach and step up cooperation with non-traditional partners.

Thirdly, with its portfolio of technical assistance programmes, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) continues to be a central partner for assisting the States Members of the United Nations in implementing practical measures to combat trafficking in persons. We encourage States to make use of UNODC's expertise. Capacity-building programmes for criminal justice practitioners, support in the development of legislation and national referral mechanisms to identify and assist the victims of trafficking, as well as the development of training modules for law enforcement, are a few examples of the kind of assistance provided. We also welcome the focus of today's debate on fostering cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in order to eradicate trafficking in persons.

In that regard, we would like to highlight the important work done by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). During our OSCE chairmanship this year, Austria has made the prevention of and fight against trafficking in human beings a priority. We strive to strengthen the OSCE's commitments to combating trafficking in persons, also in the context of crisis situations, and to build on the momentum created by resolutions 2331 (2016) and 2388 (2017).

Finally, we call on those States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol. We encourage everyone to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children, and thank Italy for its leadership and recent generous contribution in that regard.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate on the issue of trafficking in persons in conflict situations, which is an issue of priority concern for the Philippine Government.

The Philippines shares the view that in times of conflict, women and children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. There is therefore a greater imperative for Governments to address the vulnerability of persons caught or affected by conflict against the greater threats to their life, dignity and security. Despite challenges in monitoring incidents and the extent of this crime in conflict areas, the Philippine Government remains committed to protecting the welfare of persons who are vulnerable to trafficking in conflict situations, through preventive measures.

The Philippines has adopted a one-country-team and multistakeholder approach to trafficking in persons, which consolidates the mandates, efforts, resources and interests of the duty-bearers and stakeholders to develop a robust response. It has resulted in promoting the awareness and mainstreaming of interventions, down to the grassroots level. Realizing the increased vulnerability of populations in conflict areas, the Government has activated a structure called the gender-based violence cluster, composed mainly of law enforcers, social welfare service providers who specialize in gender issues, and civil society representatives. The cluster is tasked with addressing the needs of women and children in conflict situations,

in particular in mitigating vulnerabilities to sexual violence and trafficking. The cluster develops and implements programmes for access to protected information, psychosocial and trauma-informed care, protective custody and access to education and economic opportunities. That approach has been implemented most recently in the Philippine Government's response to the crisis in Marawi, where, among other notable initiatives, the Government deployed an all-women contingent from police and military services, representing a vital component of its post-conflict and reconstruction activities.

To address the problem of human trafficking as a means to finance the activities of terrorists, armed groups and transnational organized crime networks, it is important to examine trafficking corridors and the business flow of trafficking. That approach has enabled the Philippines to strategically locate victims and traffickers in the entire process, especially at critical points of intervention, where victims are the most visible and can be rescued. It also allows for the identification of critical points in the business flow in order to deal the strongest blow to the operations of trafficking syndicates, and to expose and develop strategies to arrest new methods employed by traffickers.

With an estimated 4 million Filipino migrant workers today, the Philippine Government has made it a priority to provide them with protection from human trafficking and exploitation, through national laws, international arrangements, cooperation with destination countries and initiatives in multilateral forums. An example of international efforts is the migrants in countries in crisis initiative, which the Philippines spearheaded in cooperation with the United States and other partners, and which has sought to improve responses to assist migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster. That comprehensive, rights-based approach has resulted in the successful prosecutions of perpetrators of human trafficking. The global compact on safe, regular, and orderly migration also provides us with an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation to enable migrants to move across borders safely and prevent them from falling prey to traffickers.

The response to human trafficking and all its aspects should acknowledge and understand the political, socioeconomic and even cultural push factors, and bring together Government, civil society and the private sector at both the domestic and international fronts. The very nature of human trafficking requires cross-border cooperation. Member States need to strengthen international cooperation on information sharing, law enforcement, border control and judicial systems, and learn important lessons to enhance their own national action plans to more effectively combat that problem. Criminal networks, armed groups and terrorists groups must not be allowed to further thrive in situations of instability and chaos, to prey on the fear, hardship, and misery of others caught in conflict and post-conflict situations and to profit from activities, such as forced labour, slavery and other forms of exploitation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Skinner-Klee Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Italy on having assumed the presidency of the Security Council and, above all, for having convened this open debate on such an important issue, as well as the clear concept note (S/2017/972, annex), which you circulated, Sir. On behalf of my delegation, I also thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Fedotov, and Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, United Nations Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, for their briefings.

Experience has shown beyond any doubt that armed conflicts and humanitarian crises increase and exacerbate the risk faced especially by women and children — but also by men — of falling prey to traffickers. This vulnerability also leads to the victimization of refugees, migrants and displaced persons. Trafficking in human beings is both a cause and a consequence of instability resulting from conflicts. The evidence of the link between trafficking and the activities of terrorist groups and transnational organized crime is of increasing concern.

More so than any other international body, the Security Council has witnessed the high cost in human lives and tragedies caused by conflicts with their devastating effects. The work carried out by this body can have an impact concerning the issue at hand. In fact, a year ago there was a positive impact on the theme, which has brought us together today, when the Council adopted resolution 2331 (2016), which condemns all acts of trafficking, particularly the sale or trade in persons undertaken by Da'esh. Similarly, that important resolution focuses on the critical aspect of recognizing the importance of collecting and preserving

evidence relating to such acts so as to ensure that those responsible be held accountable for them. Moreover, it represents an important step towards the possibility of imposing targeted sanctions for individuals and entities involved in trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict and in sexual violence in conflict.

We deplore the fact that in conflicts and humanitarian crises, the majority of victims have been disproportionately children. Our outrage is even greater when we consider that there were more than 24 million new cases worldwide for 2016, as the Special Rapporteur notes in her report (A/HRC/32/41). My delegation strongly condemns the fact that at the regional and national levels, migrant children and women on the move are more vulnerable to falling victim to trafficking and other forms of exploitation, including at the hands of transnational criminal networks, as well as being exposed to xenophobia, discrimination, abuse and indiscriminate violence.

We regret that, owing to the absence of established and safe migratory channels and of permanent mechanisms aimed at enabling children and their families to obtain formal migration status or residency permits, children are forced to seek precarious alternatives that increase their risk of being sold, trafficked or exposed to other forms of exploitation, which in turn entails the sometimes arbitrary detention of women and children at borders.

Addressing such a complex problem in this open debate encourages us to continue our work in ceaselessly confronting the scourge of trafficking in persons because it degrades humans, and the Council cannot refrain from acting while knowing that such abominable, inhumane and atrocious acts are taking place. We therefore call on the Security Council to make a concerted effort so that it not become indifferent to the horrors of the various forms of slavery, which we are witnessing today to the shame of the entire civilized international community.

Lastly, my delegation believes that this issue must continue to be included on the Council's agenda for further analysis, given the interdependent relationship linking the pillars of peace and security, development and human rights. Now is the time to consolidate efforts and form synergies among the various international instruments so as to establish concerted mechanisms that will allow us to consolidate our work to abolish the detestable practices that trafficking and slavery engender.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I thank Italy for its invitation to participate in this open debate on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict.

Argentina views trafficking in persons as a complex and very serious form of exploitation and abuse that violates its victims' human rights. Similarly, Argentina believes that combating trafficking must be carried out in a holistic manner and involve the many relevant stakeholders within the framework of defending and promoting human rights. It is therefore fitting that the issue be addressed as a priority matter in the General Assembly.

Argentina recognizes that the crime of human trafficking is a global problem, and, as such, the international community must confront it in a coordinated manner. In that context, it was important for the issue to gain visibility in the Security Council as the vulnerability of the victims is increasing in conflict situations, in particular with regard to women, children, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, internally displaced persons and refugees. We currently see how terrorist groups are using trafficking in persons and sexual violence as weapons of terror and as a means of financing their activities. It is imperative to help and protect victims and combat the financing of terrorism through trafficking. In that regard, the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, plays a fundamental role in supporting States in that endeavour.

At the multilateral level, Argentina maintains its firm commitment to combating human trafficking, the most extreme form of violence, through the adoption of national policies aimed at eliminating that scourge in our country. At the national level, combating trafficking in persons is being addressed horizontally through Argentina's executive committee on combating the trafficking and exploitation of persons and protecting and assisting the victims, which coordinates the work of various ministries through the federal council on combating trafficking and exploiting persons and protecting and assisting victims, which is aimed at developing a federal strategy to combat trafficking in persons.

The Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of National Security have mainstreamed the promotion of a gender perspective within the national security and armed forces. They conduct training activities and prevention exercises in the area of gender violence and trafficking in people, including for the early detection of human trafficking situations at border crossings. The Argentinian Joint Peacekeeping Operations Training Centre trains all national units deployed in United Nations peacekeeping operations, guided by the principle that conflicts can only be effectively addressed when respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights, including those of women and children in conflict, is ensured. In particular, the Centre's annual International Women and Peace and Security seminar includes a specific module on human trafficking so as to provide tools to prevent, detect and combat it in conflict situations.

Argentina reiterates its renewed commitment to combatting human trafficking in all contexts, including in the context of conflict situations, and reiterates the need to continue discussing this issue within the General Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Bonser (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada would like to thank the delegation of Italy for its leadership in ensuring that the issue of trafficking in persons in situations of conflict remains a focus of the Security Council.

Canada is committed to collaborating with the United Nations and all countries to prevent this crime, bring those who commit it to justice and to help survivors go on to lead healthy and productive lives.

(*spoke in English*)

Let me say at the outset that we were pleased to co-sponsor resolution 2388 (2017), passed earlier today under your leadership, Mr. President. The prevention of all forms of violence against all people, especially women and girls, is a particular priority for Canada. We have been working to keep this issue at the top of the global agenda, and to implement resolution 2331 (2016). Canada's new Feminist International Assistance Policy seeks to reduce poverty, inequality, violence and conflict, all of which increase vulnerability — especially for women, children and youth — to human trafficking, and lead migrants towards smuggling.

Canada is committed to ensuring that Da'esh is held to account for its violations of international humanitarian law, as demonstrated by our three-year regional strategy to counter Da'esh and respond to the Iraq and Syria crises. Our humanitarian and stabilization assistance in Iraq also includes concrete support to Yezidis and other vulnerable victims of sexual and gender-based violence and trafficking.

By employing the tools developed to combat financial crime, we can deprive human traffickers of funding and access to the international financial system, making it more difficult for them to accomplish their destructive goals. For example, the Canadian Project Protect, established in 2016, is a reporting entity-led initiative, inspired by the story of a survivor of human trafficking and victims advocate. The resulting unique public-private endeavour includes Canada's financial intelligence unit, law enforcement and financial institutions committed to making the tracking of money laundering associated with this activity a priority of their compliance regimes.

In addition, sexual and gender-based violence is a serious barrier to the full and prompt recovery of communities after armed conflict. Canada commends the comprehensive approach taken by the former Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We must work to ensure that United Nations and Member States' policies and actions in tackling the scourge of human trafficking are fully integrated in the context of conflicts, humanitarian crises and post-conflict situations. In that regard, we note the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, which were launched at the recent 2017 United Nations Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial and swiftly endorsed by Canada and over 50 other Member States.

(*spoke in French*)

We invite other Member States to join us and look forward to working with all to implement the Vancouver Principles as a means of addressing the terrible problem of child soldiers. Canada welcomes the ongoing attention of the Council to this issue and is supportive of keeping this issue at the top of the international agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): Bangladesh thanks the Italian presidency for convening this open ministerial debate. We appreciate the insights shared by the Secretary-General and the other briefers.

Bangladesh welcomes the adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) this morning, and aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We shared our priorities and recommendations in that regard during the Council's open debates in December 2016 (see S/PV.7585) and March 2017 (see S/PV.7898). The importance of enhancing United Nations inter-agency coordination and strengthening data collection and analysis cannot be over-emphasized.

Despite our collective commitments and efforts, trafficking in persons continues to thrive, with horrific consequences. It is evident that some international terrorist groups are resorting to trafficking in persons to bolster their power, recruitment base and finances. Refugees and other conflict-related displaced persons remain at the highest risk of trafficking and exploitation.

As the Council is well aware, since 25 August Bangladesh has witnessed an unprecedented influx of 620,000 people, mostly Rohingya, from Myanmar's Rakhine state, in the wake of the widespread atrocity crimes committed against them. We remain deeply concerned over the possibility that many women and children among them falling will fall prey to traffickers and smugglers operating regionally. With the sea routes becoming safer during the current season for operating makeshift boats, it is most likely that these elements would try to take advantage of the forcibly displaced people from Rakhine state still entering Bangladesh almost on a daily basis. Those who claim that the situation on the ground in Rakhine state has stabilized are either deliberately ignoring the evident reality or have a vested agenda.

Our law-enforcement and border-management authorities have mobilized enhanced resources in order to remain vigilant against traffickers and other organized criminal networks. It is, however, a possibility that they might find themselves overstretched in the face of changing tactics and potential incentives deployed by traffickers, violent extremist groups and other organized criminal networks. It is crucial that the relevant authorities receive meaningful cooperation through information sharing, prevention and interception from their relevant counterparts in countries of the region, including Myanmar.

The case of the Rohingya rescued at sea off the shores of other countries of the region during the 2015 Andaman Sea crisis is perhaps an indication of how the victims are likely to be treated under such circumstances. In the wake of the discovery of mass graves, harrowing reports of torture, killing and exploitation of victims, and loss of hundreds of lives on rickety boats adrift at sea, our delegation urged the need for addressing the root causes of the crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Regrettably, the situation continued to deteriorate further with the Rohingya being increasingly pushed to the brink, owing to systematic human rights violations leading to the commission of atrocity crimes against them. That has only created a fertile ground for traffickers and other organized criminal networks to operate with near impunity.

The Secretary-General is expected to brief the Council next month on the situation in Rahkhine state, where we would urge him to make practical recommendations for addressing the renewed threats of trafficking in persons. It needs to be borne in mind that every individual languishing in camps on a protracted basis or left in the lurch in the name of national verification by Myanmar would run the risk of falling victim to traffickers and other criminal operatives. The situation in Myanmar needs to be taken up by the Council as the test case for attesting to the efficacy of the resolution adopted today, and for addressing trafficking in persons during conflicts as part of its efforts to sustain peace.

In conclusion, we agree with the briefers that trafficking in persons in conflict situations perhaps constitutes the greatest human rights issue of our time. We reaffirm our commitment to join hands with fellow Member States in further strengthening the coordinated response and action of the United Nations against trafficking in persons, slavery and forced labour.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank Italy and you, Mr. President, for convening today's constructive

debate. We wish you every success at the helm of the Security Council this month.

We associate ourselves with other Member States that have reiterated the importance of Security Council resolutions for dealing with human trafficking, which undermines the rule of law, thereby fostering continuing transnational organized crime that in turn leads to further instability. This very serious issue demands that we work to combat various different types of crime. For that reason, Iraq has ratified a number of related international and regional conventions, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementary Protocols, which we ratified in 2009. In that regard, in 2012 we enacted law No. 28 on anti-trafficking, establishing the necessary mechanisms for delivering the required assistance to victims of human trafficking and for combating the crime and its consequences generally, as well as for ensuring that perpetrators be held accountable for such crimes, which undermine human dignity.

We also have a number of constitutional sections that criminalize forced labour and slavery as well as trafficking in women and children. In the past three years, serious crimes have been committed against Yezidi women and others, at the hands of the terrorists of Da'esh. As a result, under our aforementioned law No. 28 of 2012, my Government set up a commission within the Ministry of the Interior. The commission brings together representatives from the various provinces and governorates with the aim of formulating programmes and plans for countering trafficking in persons and ensuring that victims and witnesses are protected. It also enables us to exchange information and share experiences with various relevant bodies, neighbouring States and international organizations. We have also launched a number of awareness-raising campaigns to spread a culture of fighting human trafficking, working with civil-society organizations and academic and religious groups.

Human trafficking and similar crimes perpetrated by terrorists, including slavery, sexual exploitation, terrorism and forced labour, enable them to finance themselves. Iraq has suffered from such crimes, such as the abduction by members of Da'esh of thousands of Iraqi citizens, especially women and children and in particular people from the Yezidi community, who have become victims of trafficking and endured inhumane and degrading treatment. In that regard, we urge these victims' countries of destination not to treat them as criminals or as illegal migrants. Rather than being arrested or forcibly repatriated, they should be given help. For our part, we are providing material reparations for victims of human trafficking, including victims of Da'esh, with a particular focus on women and girls. In that regard, our judicial authorities are striving to build the capacities of the relevant institutions in order to prosecute the perpetrators of these crimes, establish criminal justice and protect citizens against such crimes.

Enforcing anti-trafficking laws is crucial, and while we now have law no. 28 of 2012 and a number of mechanisms for implementing it, what that really requires is that we train our law-enforcement bodies in tackling such transnational organized crime, bearing in mind that such crimes may fall under several jurisdictions at once. We must therefore emphasize the importance of judicial cooperation in putting an end to such crimes. In order to show our determination to combat human trafficking, we have been working to stop traffickers and terrorist groups abducting people and forcing them to cross Iraq's borders. In that regard, we contributed to the drafting of the political declaration on the implementation of the Global Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, just adopted by the General Assembly in September as resolution 72/1.

The responsibility for this issue is a collective one, shared by every State. Iraq therefore calls on all Member States to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 2195 (2014), 2331 (2016) and 2379 (2017). We also call on Member States to support us in dealing with these challenges. My delegation appreciates Italy's efforts during the drafting of resolution 2388 (2017), which the Council adopted unanimously today, and of which we were a sponsor. The resolution enables us to better identify the real and potential victims of human trafficking, particularly unaccompanied minors, and to ensure a coordinated response, and it will help the various United Nations missions on the ground fight networks involved in human trafficking. Furthermore, we now have a great deal of experience in fighting human trafficking, and an investigative team is being established in that regard, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 2379 (2017).

Lastly, Iraq calls on all States to abide by their commitments and scale up their efforts to combat human trafficking so that we can eradicate it. We need

the Council's help in tackling these problems, and we need to be able to work cooperatively with various States on the political, economic and security fronts. The fact is that human trafficking is a global issue, and no State can confront it alone.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the International Organization for Migration.

Mr. Nour: I am pleased to be taking the floor on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). I would first like to thank Italy and the Security Council for convening today's important open debate.

The IOM welcomes the increased attention that the international community is according to human trafficking, and particularly the recent focus on the phenomenon of human trafficking in conflict situations. The IOM believes that the crime of human trafficking has been largely overlooked in emergency situations, despite growing evidence of the connections between human trafficking and armed conflict.

We are mindful that this open debate is happening at a time of unprecedented global human mobility, record high numbers of displaced populations and multiple simultaneous, complex and protracted crises in different parts of the world that are putting more and more vulnerable people at risk of human trafficking. We are concerned about the fact that the rights of many migrants continue to be violated during potentially fatal journeys. We have seen and learned from first-hand experience that situations of armed conflict, natural disasters and protracted humanitarian crises can create conditions conducive to human trafficking. With that in mind, I would like to highlight three areas where, from the IOM's perspective, a more concerted effort and coordinated action are required.

First, while legal frameworks for victims of trafficking have been strengthened in recent years, less progress has been made in preventing human trafficking from occurring in the first place. The demand for cheap goods and sexual services is what drives human trafficking. Recent studies by the IOM and the International Labour Organization have shown that the impact of armed conflict on trafficking, child recruitment and forced labour is on the rise. Efforts should therefore be made to reduce the demands for goods and services that are met by trafficked persons and exploited migrants. That requires concrete measures that will encourage, help or oblige companies to establish decent working conditions for all employees in their supply chains.

Secondly, despite the progress that has been made in protecting people identified as victims of human trafficking, the numbers of those who benefit from protection schemes remain small. In order to address this problem, we must increase the ability of Governments and civil society to identify and assist migrants in vulnerable situations, including victims of trafficking, by targeting high-risk locations such as border crossing points, as well as sectors in industries where the risk of trafficking is high and where effective responses are urgently required.

Thirdly, our experience from working in many parts of the world has shown us that responding to human trafficking requires appropriate and timely data. We therefore emphasize the importance of increasing efforts to provide good data, improve the analysis of the information available and share that information as widely as possible. We should find ways to overcome obstacles to sharing trafficking data, within a framework of strict confidentiality and data privacy protection. That can be achieved through multi-stakeholder open-data publishing platforms, such as the IOM's Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative.

Finally, the IOM welcomed the statement that the Secretary-General made on Monday about Libya. In a press release today, the Director General of the IOM called for a number of possible concrete actions to be considered. The smugglers' business model is at the core of this human episode, and the IOM is working with local authorities to disrupt smuggling networks and provide assistance to victims. The IOM has been voluntarily providing assistance with returns since 2015 to some 13,000 migrants who have left Libya to return to more than 30 countries around the world.

In conclusion, the IOM strongly supports the Council's efforts to eliminate human trafficking in conflict situations, and we call on the Council to take into account the humanitarian aspects of crisis-induced human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I would like to join other colleagues in thanking the Italian presidency for convening this important debate. I also thank

the Secretary-General and the briefers for their contributions earlier today.

My country, Georgia, aligns itself with the statement delivered previously by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Trafficking, one of the most terrible violations of human rights, is being used by criminals and terrorist groups not only as a source of revenue but also as a weapon of terror. The ever-growing numbers of refugees and migrants, if left unaided, will only play into the hands of criminals and enhance their recruitment base. The Secretary-General's report also states that

> "the activities of terrorist groups... and other armed groups engaging in human trafficking continue to raise grave concerns" and that "more needs to be done to address human trafficking in areas affected by conflict" (*S/2017/939, paras. 4 and 3*).

In addressing human trafficking, therefore, we should also address the root causes of migration, including the issue of internal displacement. We must confront this challenge at all levels, especially in conflict or post-conflict settings. Just yesterday, we were all appalled to see the disturbing footage of slave markets in Libya. Crime thrives where the rule of law is weak. The international community needs to do much more, and urgently, to help the Government of Libya in asserting its governing rights and laying th. groundwork for the country's sustainable development, which can stop modern-day slavery from recurring. Human trafficking respects no borders. We must strengthen cooperation on law enforcement, investigations and intelligence-sharing.

Combating human trafficking has been a key priority for Georgia for more than a decade. We have seen increasingly positive assessments of our counter-trafficking efforts in global reports. According to the 2016 *Global Slavery Index*, Georgia is one of the countries taking the most effective action to end human trafficking. For instance, the second evaluation report of the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings ranked Georgia top among countries in Eastern Europe taking most action in terms of gross domestic product, and second worldwide. It also ranked Georgia as the seventeenth of 167 States taking the most effective action to end human trafficking generally.

To review the key factors and lessons on what has worked in my country, we have shown a sustainable political commitment and established a constantly evolving legislative framework that explicitly criminalizes trafficking. We have taken a multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach that in our case involves an inter-agency coordination council, our various law-enforcement agencies, a State fund for protecting and assisting victims, and civil society organizations. We have focused on proactive investigations by mobile inspection groups and special anti-trafficking units and, lastly, we have worked to raise awareness of trafficking, which is an essential preventive measure.

Georgia, as a signatory State to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, reiterates its commitment to sparing no effort to prevent trafficking, punish perpetrators and protect their victims. However, the illegal occupation of the Georgian regions of Tskhinvali/South Ossetia and Abkhazia is still the main obstacle to my Government's full implementation of its counter-trafficking measures. There are no mechanisms to effectively identify, investigate or prosecute alleged cases of trafficking in persons in occupied regions while the occupying Power continues to place undue restrictions on the local population, particularly ethnic Georgians. Systematic human rights violations there have included, among other things, the violation of the right to life and security, torture and ill-treatment, kidnapping and arbitrary detention.

In closing, I want reiterate our pledge to expand international cooperation on effective cross-border control measures and prevent and combat conflict-related human trafficking. We also call for the international community to pay more attention to the issue of granting international human rights monitoring mechanisms unhindered access to the occupied regions of Georgia.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): I would first like to thank the Italian presidency for organizing today's open debate.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union on behalf of its member countries.

Trafficking in persons is a grave human rights violation and a highly lucrative form of transnational organized crime, with huge human, social and economic implications, and it requires a concerted global response. The problem is further exacerbated by conflicts and the resulting large movements of refugees and migrants, who often become easy targets for various forms of exploitation. Bulgaria emphasizes the importance of accelerating international cooperation to eliminate human trafficking through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and cross-border approach. Better cooperation should be established among countries of origin, transit and destination on information-sharing and on victim identification, support and reintegration.

Bulgaria reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, which, along with resolution 2331 (2016), constitute a solid foundation of international law in this area. We would like to highlight the importance of resolution 2388 (2017), on the trafficking of persons in conflict situations, adopted today by the Council. We welcome the special emphasis that the new resolution puts on the protection of children and its strong language on children's rights, which is a key priority for the Government of Bulgaria. Bulgaria was a pioneer among European countries in enacting specific anti-trafficking legislation as long ago as 2003, and our legal and institutional framework for combating trafficking in persons is one of the most comprehensive in existence.

Bulgaria has criminalized trafficking in persons and introduced more severe punishment for crimes involving children. Our legislation includes provisions to ensure that victims of trafficking are not penalized for being forcibly involved in unlawful activities. We have also established a national referral mechanism for supporting trafficked persons, with the aim of strengthening respect for the human rights of victims of trafficking by providing them with unconditional support and protection, based on the principle of non-discrimination.

Bulgaria's national anti-trafficking strategy for the period from 2017 to 2021 follows a victim-centred, human rights-based, gender-specific and child-focused approach. Our national commission for combating trafficking in human beings, which coordinates State policy in this priority area, provides assistance to victims of trafficking in Government-funded shelters across the country. We established a specialized shelter for children earlier this year in order to improve the protection of child victims of trafficking by providing them with specially designed integrated services that include psychological, social, medical and legal support, assistance and social reintegration.

In the past few years, Bulgaria has increased its capacity to ensure the rights of victims of trafficking, with a special focus on children, and its participation in international efforts to fight this crime. Special measures are being taken to raise public awareness, particularly among children, in partnership with local authorities, civil society and youth volunteers.

Mr. Muhammad Bande (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation would like to you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate and for the concept note provided to guide our discussion (S/2017/972, annex). We also thank the Secretary-General, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons for sharing their perspectives on this important subject.

Nigeria aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Conflict situations expose civilians, especially women and girls, to grave dangers such as human trafficking, sexual violence and slavery. Terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Boko Haram have introduced a new dimension into the issues of trafficking in persons and the sexual exploitation of women and girls. Their outrageous acts of depravity have shocked the world and drawn unprecedented attention to the plight of women and girls in conflict situations.

The war crimes and crimes against humanity that they commit must not go unpunished. We are pleased to be able to say that Boko Haram has been militarily defeated. However, while we have had some success in liberating a good number of the women and girls they have held hostage, we will not relent until all of their hostages are freed and reunited with their loved ones. We would like to acknowledge the important role that our neighbours Cameroon, Chad and the Niger are playing in the fight against Boko Haram.

My delegation recognizes the importance of ensuring that persons who have been trafficked are shown empathy, treated as victims of crime and, in line with domestic legislation, are not penalized or stigmatized for their involvement in any unlawful activities that they have been compelled to engage in. Similarly, it is imperative to break the cycle of impunity that may exist and to hold accountable those responsible for committing such crimes. Nigeria is outraged by the operation of slave markets in Libya where people are sold like merchandise, a despicable act that must be condemned. We take note of the assurances of the Libyan Government that these cases will be investigated. The Libyan situation demonstrates the complexity of trafficking networks and the dehumanizing treatment that they subject their victims to. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that at no point in migrants' movements — whether in countries of origin, transit or destination — should they be enslaved or dehumanized.

The entities of the United Nations system must work in concert to fight human trafficking in conflict situations and in the context of terrorism, while delivering their respective mandates. We believe that this could be facilitated by improving the coordination between and among the relevant agencies. As different agencies have different capacities in terms of expertise, a coordinated approach would enhance the overall effectiveness of the United Nations in the fight against human trafficking and terrorism.

With regard to how Member States can improve their implementation of legal obligations to combat human trafficking, we see a need for greater commitment to implementing the relevant international instruments. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children is a case in point. It not only provides the first internationally agreed-on definition of trafficking in persons but also establishes a framework of obligations and standards for Member States to formulate national responses to fight human trafficking. Applying such international instruments and the relevant domestic laws is crucial to ensuring that those who engage in human trafficking in conflict situations are held accountable.

In terms of national contributions to the global efforts against the scourge of trafficking in general, Nigeria strengthened the effectiveness of its domestic laws under its 2015 trafficking in persons act by expanding the scope of crimes that fall under human trafficking. In that regard, crimes such as exporting people for prostitution, procuring people for sexual exploitation, recruiting people under 18 years of age for prostitution, sexual exploitation or pornography, and operating brothels or foreign travel that promote prostitution and sexual exploitation are treated as heinous crimes punishable under our laws.

Nigeria's establishment in 2003 of a national agency for the prohibition of trafficking in persons — creating a permanent mechanism for rescuing, assisting, supporting and catering to victims of human trafficking, as well as for arresting, prosecuting and jailing perpetrators of such trafficking — has helped to refocus our fight against trafficking. Thanks to the agency's establishment, the issue of human trafficking has been effectively mainstreamed into broader Government policies and programmes on economic and social development, human rights, the rule of law, good governance, education, natural-disaster management and post-conflict reconstruction. The agency has also strengthened partnerships among the Government, civil society, faith-based organizations and religious bodies and the media, as well as various rights groups. The essence of those partnerships is to facilitate synergy among the various stakeholders with a view to coming up with policies and measures that can permanently eradicate this menace.

With regard to the issue of mitigating victims' suffering, the establishment of the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children, is a welcome development, since it should help to provide a reliable way of restoring livelihoods and ensuring victims' reintegration and rehabilitation into society. We urge for more funding and donations in order to ensure that the objectives behind the creation of the voluntary trust fund are fully realized and of genuine benefit to victims. We would also like to underscore our appreciation for the efforts of UNODC and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons in their sustained operations to end trafficking in persons.

In the final analysis, we must aim to enhance coherence and build alliances to confront these issues head-on. Legal pathways to migration are an essential component in dealing with this problem. Equally critical is the need for greater responsibility-sharing to provide protection to those in need. To achieve that objective, we must implement the strategy laid out in the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. With

solid partnerships and a clear approach, we can ensure that criminals are brought to justice.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Sisa (Botswana): First of all, I would like to congratulate Italy on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November and on convening an open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. My delegation welcomes the debate on this topic, which is increasingly receiving global attention due to the sharp rise in the numbers of victims of human trafficking and kidnapping for ransom committed by terrorist groups in conflict situations.

Reported cases of human trafficking have been on the increase in areas affected by conflicts, such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, countries of the Lake Chad basin, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, north-eastern Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, the Sudan, Syria, Colombia and Yemen. It is worth emphasizing that no country is immune to human trafficking.

My delegation applauds the Security Council for adopting resolution 2331 (2016), which condemned trafficking of persons as a violation of the victims' human rights.

Trafficking in persons is a serious crime that threatens human security and dignity and is often associated with severe atrocities, such as organ harvesting, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Trafficking in persons often affects women, children, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. Accordingly, Botswana reaffirms its commitment to the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1), which the General Assembly adopted on 27 September.

Botswana deplores trafficking in persons, which is exploited by terrorist groups and trafficking networks for the purposes of financing terrorist activities and transnational organized crime. This type of crime fosters instability, forced labour, prostitution, slavery, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, thereby undermining human rights, the rule of law and sustainable development. Similarly, my country also condemns the recruitment and use of child soldiers in armed conflict.

It is pleasing to note that there are 189 States parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and 172 States parties to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which are the key international instruments that guide global efforts to counter trafficking in persons. In addition to being a party to the Organized Crime Convention and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, Botswana passed the Anti-Human Trafficking Act of 2014 and established the Human Trafficking Prohibition Committee to prohibit, prevent and combat human trafficking as well as to protect and assist victims of trafficking in persons and other matters incidental thereto.

Botswana has also developed an anti-human trafficking national action plan for the years 2017 to 2020, whose full implementation is estimated to cost $11,118,500. In this regard, we deeply appreciate the continued support that we receive from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other United Nations agencies to train prosecutors and law-enforcement and judicial officers on such emerging crimes as human trafficking, terrorism and money-laundering. Through such assistance, Botswana has conducted public-education campaigns and capacity-building and training workshops for different actors to raise awareness of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. To create public awareness of this heinous crime, since 2015 Botswana has been commemorating the World Day against Trafficking in Persons on 30 July.

At the regional level, the Southern African Development Community has adopted a ten-year strategic plan of action on combating trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which runs from 2009 to 2019, in order to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated response to human trafficking through research, information-sharing and exchange of experiences, expertise, best practices and capacity-building.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Botswana's commitment to the Transnational Organized Crime Convention and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. Botswana calls for strengthened international cooperation, partnerships and technical assistance so as to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to protect and assist victims of human trafficking.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Maldives.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I wish to thank Italy, President of the Security Council this month, for holding today's debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. I also wish to extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General for the updates provided on this topic.

Trafficking in persons is the modern form of slavery. It should be outlawed everywhere in the world. The Maldives Parliament criminalized trafficking in persons in 2013, and the Government of Maldives continues to take strong measures against this shameful crime. Trafficking in persons in conflict situations is one of the most dreadful crimes. Conflict situations place individuals in the most vulnerable position, and yet the reality is that conflict zones have become the breeding grounds for criminal activities. Millions of people are falling prey to human traffickers as they desperately try to escape violence.

The Maldives takes note of the increasing importance of the role of the Security Council in confronting human trafficking in conflict situations. Resolution 2331 (2016) condemns all acts of human trafficking in areas affected by armed conflicts, and the two open debates held in the last year on this subject (see S/PV.7847 and S/PV.7898) highlight the urgency of addressing the issue.

The Maldives believes that the best strategy to bring an end to the heinous crime of human trafficking is to cultivate a culture of respect for human dignity, the fundamental values of human rights and the responsibility to respect and uphold those rights, in particular the rights of women, children and those that are in vulnerable situations. It is therefore absolutely necessary for the United Nations and other actors to work with national Governments to strengthen the capacities of relevant institutions to implement national and international laws and norms and to bring perpetrators of such criminal activities to justice. Only then would we be able to cultivate a culture in which no individual would tolerate the subjugation of a fellow human being.

The Maldives hosts a large number of migrant workers in its workforce. The Government recognizes the potential vulnerabilities of individual members of the expatriate community to the predatory designs of transnational human trafficking syndicates and the importance of protecting their rights. The very first legislation that President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom signed into law was the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, in December 2013. To strengthen the implementation of that Act, the Government adopted a five-year national action plan to combat human trafficking nationwide.

At the international level, the Maldives joined the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in February 2013. And in 2016, the Maldives acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

But we recognize that the implementation of international treaties requires more than the plans; it requires the highest level of political will and a range of measures. Above all, it requires stronger global cooperation and coordination and the sharing of information and best practices. The Maldives will always remain an active partner in crafting shared solutions for a world free of human trafficking, a world free of every kind of slavery, and a world where every nation and every society has a say in shaping our shared destiny.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Yaakob (Malaysia): I join previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to Italy for convening today's timely meeting. We also thank the Secretary-General and other speakers for their respective briefings and steadfast commitment to addressing the issue of human trafficking.

Malaysia welcomes the adoption today of follow-up resolution 2388 (2017), which will strengthen resolution 2331 (2016) in addressing heinous crimes of trafficking in persons trapped in conflict situations.

Trafficking in persons is absolutely unacceptable in any context. Human traffickers strip people of their dignity and negate the respect inherent in all humankind. My delegation wishes to briefly highlight three aspects that we believe will make a real difference in tackling this scourge.

First, it is imperative to strengthen cooperation and coordination among Member States, as well as regional and international organizations. Therefore, we call upon Member States that have yet to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its additional Protocols, which

provide the principal foundation for our concerted actions, to do so as soon as possible.

Given the multifaceted dimensions of trafficking in persons, which is associated with sexual violence and funding terrorist activities, it is crucial that the international community mobilizes complementary legal means to investigate, disrupt and dismantle trafficking networks. We fully support the efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other bodies, as well as bilateral partners, to provide technical support to Member States to build and enhance their law enforcement capacities.

As a country of destination and transit, we have learned that cooperation and coordination with neighbouring countries and the international community are essential in our common efforts to combat this ugly scourge. In that regard, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has taken a unified commitment to combat and prevent trafficking in persons through the implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and its related plan of actions, adopted in November 2015. We also appreciate the strong support for such regional-level efforts by our East Asia Summit partners, as reflected in the Summit declarations adopted recently in September 2017.

Secondly, the Council must better utilize its available tools to monitor trends in human trafficking in armed conflict areas, identify perpetrators and hold them accountable. Information on and evidence of acts of trafficking in persons and sexual violence in conflicts should be made available to the Council and channelled to the relevant sanctions committees.We support integrating into the work of the 1267 Monitoring Team and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate a focus on addressing trafficking in persons and the use of sexual violence in armed conflict where there are clear linkages to terrorist activities.

At the same time, the crucial outreach and advocacy roles of both the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict must be better leveraged. We call for the Council's continued engagement with those envoys, including through the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the various sanctions committees.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the need for support for victims and survivors of trafficking and sexual violence to help them return to a secure and stable life. Women and children subjected to any violations and abuses, including trafficking and sexual violence at the hands of Da'esh, Boko Haram and similar groups, should be considered victims and given access to funding and assistance. In that respect, the roles of the local communities, civil society and religious leaders are pivotal in ensuring the reintegration and rehabilitation of survivors and in eliminating the stigma that can be associated with the ordeal that they have been through.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Malaysia's enduring resolve to combat and eradicate trafficking in persons, and our equally strong commitments to continuing to work with the international community until we bring an end to those crimes against humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belize.

Ms. Young (Belize): Belize welcomes this opportunity afforded by the presidency of Italy to reaffirm our full commitment to combating trafficking in persons and to most emphatically condemn trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict.

Notwithstanding the adoption of resolution 2331 (2016), reports on the plight of migrants — especially the latest news of human slavery emanating from Libya — reveal that much more needs to be done at the highest level to address the scourge of human trafficking.

Belize concurs with the Secretary-General's observation that at its core, our response must be based on a common understanding of trafficking in persons and the widely accepted legal framework for cooperation found in the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In addition, there are a number of other human rights treaties, as well as the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, global instruments focused on women and children in armed conflict, and the broader sustainable development agenda that together can reinforce international efforts to treat more comprehensively and in a coordinated manner the factors that expose the most vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Importantly, it is essential to fully integrate those instruments into national legislation, raise public awareness and provide targeted approaches, especially for law enforcement.

In 2003, Belize enacted the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act and amended it in 2013 to make it far stronger. Also, in 2013, we enacted the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Prohibition Act. Belize has also benefitted from regional and international support and partnerships with civil society to provide ongoing training to build our preventive, protection and prosecutorial capacity to address trafficking in persons.

We endeavour to further enhance our capacity to combat trafficking through improving our victims' assistance programmes; advancing training for investigators; establishing specialized investigative units, dedicated prosecutors and judges; and implementing a fast-track system for human trafficking cases. We provide for basic needs, counselling and medical services. However, we still lack financial and human resources to address long-term assistance to facilitate re-integration into the work force and to transition to self-housing from the protective system. In our experience, we have found that language and low levels of literacy are major barriers to victims being retrained and accessing gainful employment.

Belize acknowledges the importance of the analysis of financial flows and transactions relating to trafficking in persons and the Secretary-General's call to States to increase their efforts to collect, analyse and share such financial data. That is an area in which further cooperation will be required to build capacity as needed.

Right-thinking people in Belize, who form the majority, and the Government of Belize are dedicated to eliminating this scourge. This scourge is not limited to any specific ethnicity or country. Every country must therefore do its part to stem the trafficking of human beings. It is a matter of utmost urgency and a moral necessity.

Today's open debate, against the backdrop of the recent graphic pictures of human slavery, is an opportunity to galvanize international action to specifically address the plight of persons in armed conflict in the context of the wider global efforts to combat trafficking in persons. Belize co-sponsored today's resolution 2388 (2017) and is committed to doing its part.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mr. Duarte Lopes (Portugal): I would like to thank the Italian presidency of the Council for convening this open debate and to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the adoption of today's resolution 2388 (2017), which my country co-sponsored and which builds upon the momentum created by resolution 2331 (2016).

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons and the African Union's Commissioner for Peace and Security for their comprehensive presentations this morning.

Portugal aligns itself with the statement already delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most serious violations of human rights and constitutes an offence to the dignity and integrity of the human being. Every year, millions of men, women and children are victims of human trafficking for exploitation, including slavery, forced labour, the removal of organs and prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation.

It is a complex reality, transnational in most cases. Trafficking in human beings is often exacerbated in situations of conflict and in humanitarian crises and is aggravated by poverty, gender inequality, unemployment, weak rule of law and poor governance. In recent years, and very acutely also some days ago, there have been disturbing reports about realities like slave markets that we would prefer to situate in the darkest corners of human history. We also note with concern that trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, in situations of conflict has become an increasing trend and is often used as a war tactic.

In our world today, individuals are turned into commodities and their inherent human dignity is wiped out. Any intervention deemed effective must be based on common and coordinated efforts in the fields of prevention, awareness-raising, support and repression at the international, regional and national levels. It is a critical global issue that demands effective collective action, and those responsible must be submitted to justice.

Portugal urges all delegations that have not yet done so to accede to and ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. The

Protocol provides a broad basis for action against traffickers, as well as protection and assistance to victims.

Portugal developed its first national plan against trafficking in human beings in 2007, with the involvement of the public sector and civil society. The third national plan against trafficking is currently being implemented and entails policy measures focused on prevention, awareness and research, education and training, criminal investigation and cooperation.

Trafficking in human beings is one of the most abominable crimes against human dignity. Preventing and punishing trafficking in human beings is crucial to achieving a future of dignity and freedom for all our countries and all our peoples.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the fraternal country of Italy on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important open debate.

We endorse the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

We wish to thank Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Ms. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro, Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, for their presentations this morning.

In resolution 2331 (2016), the Security Council unanimously condemns all instances of human trafficking in areas affected by armed conflict, since such trafficking is a human rights violation and a criminal activity that helps the financing of and recruitment for terrorist groups. In that connection, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2388 (2017) this morning.

The report of the Secretary-General before us (S/2017/939) highlights the frightening statistics with regard to the proliferation in human trafficking. It also notes the link between armed conflict and trafficking in persons and describes conflicts throughout the world and their serious repercussions. In that connection, we note that forced migration results from those conflicts, which have compelled millions of people to leave their countries in pursuit of a life of dignity elsewhere. We are horrified by the thousands of victims who have lost their lives as a result.

We reaffirm that, as the Secretary-General said, there is no place for slavery in today's world. It is one of the most serious human rights violations and may constitute a crime against humanity. In that regard, we wish to recall the importance of dealing with the migratory flows and to do so in a comprehensive and humane way, and of strengthening development cooperation so that we can understand the underlying causes of that trafficking.

Recent reports establish the link between armed conflict and trafficking in persons. They include the most recent report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2331 (2016), the December 2016 *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the reports of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (see A/HRC/32/41 and A/71/303). They all highlight the fact that human trafficking in areas affected by humanitarian crises and by armed conflict takes different forms, including exploitation, sexual abuse, slavery and similar practices. Slavery is also used as a tactic of terror, including by groups such as Da'esh, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. Women and girls continue to be victims of such trafficking, forced into marriage and offered as a reward to terrorist fighters. Those are serious human rights violations and a source of financing for terrorist groups and transnational crime networks.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an essential tool in the fight against the proliferation of the scourge of human trafficking and in tackling the root causes that subject people to such trafficking. The fight against human trafficking and the achievement of sustainable development go hand in hand, and it is very encouraging that 3 of the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda focus on combating the various forms of human trafficking.

The State of Kuwait believes that it is important to analyse the root causes of the increased human trafficking, in particular in cases of armed conflict. We reaffirm our commitment to safeguarding human rights and to continuing our efforts to combat trafficking in

persons. To that end, we adopted Law No. 91 of 2013 on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. We have also acceded to various international agreements on combating trafficking in persons.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council therefore has the accompanying responsibility to combat human trafficking in situations of armed conflict. We must all strengthen the international legal framework of the Council in that regard. Clearly, we must focus not only on combating human trafficking and the link with armed conflict but also on strengthening international cooperation in order to make full use of the existing mechanisms, including by strengthening effective cooperation among the various United Nations agencies.

In conclusion, I wish to pay particular tribute to the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organization and the International Organization for Migration and to the tireless efforts of all United Nations specialized agencies that have played a leading role in combating all forms of human trafficking. Kuwait reiterates its commitment to continuing its efforts and to supporting international efforts to combat this crime by adopting laws to deter it and by strengthening the international framework in order to put an end once and for all to the crime of trafficking in persons.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Mikayilli (Azerbaijan): We thank the Italian presidency for convening this open debate on trafficking in persons in conflict situations. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and to the other briefers for their statements.

As highlighted during the deliberations, trafficking in persons is both a cause and a consequence of conflict and instability. In that regard, we note with concern the nexus between trafficking in persons, terrorism and transnational organized crime. The recruitment and use of children for combat, the growing link between human trafficking and the financing of terrorism also cause deep concern. The large influx of refugees and migrants further exacerbates the situation and exposes civilians, especially women and children, to a greater risk of being subjected to human trafficking. We also express our concern that civilian populations are often viewed by armed groups as objects to be trafficked.

Resolution 2388 (2017), adopted today, underscores that certain acts or offences associated with trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict may constitute war crimes. We fully agree with the provision in the resolution that human trafficking, especially women and girls, in the context of armed conflict, should not be associated with any religion or civilization.

Azerbaijan strongly condemns all acts of trafficking in persons, including in conflict situations. First and foremost, every effort should be made to identify and to eliminate the root causes and drivers that create a fertile ground for human trafficking, to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide the necessary legal, psychological, material and other assistance to victims. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2017/939) clearly indicates that human trafficking in conflict situations is facilitated by a weakness or collapse of the rule of law. Therefore, strengthening State authority and the rule of law is crucial to effectively fighting, disrupting and dismantling the networks involved in carrying out this evil.

Azerbaijan welcomes the increased attention to combating trafficking in persons at the global level. The specific reference to ending modern slavery and human trafficking in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1), as well as the three open debates of the Security Council on this theme in the past year, testify to the growing international recognition of the threat that human trafficking represents. We believe that the issue will also be adequately addressed in the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

In his report, the Secretary-General encourages Member States to take a number of steps to combat the scourge of human trafficking that range from acceding to relevant international instruments to strengthening international cooperation to enhancing cross-governmental coordination. Azerbaijan ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2003. In the intervening 14 years, we have adopted three national action plans and inserted four articles that define liability for human trafficking into our criminal code. A special policy unit has been set up through the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A national coordinating mechanism was established to coordinate

activities of line ministries, civil-society organizations and foreign partners involved in combating human trafficking. The exchange of information on combating human trafficking is being carried out through 96 bilateral and multilateral agreements. Memorandums and protocols have been signed with 40 countries.

Azerbaijan also continues with its consistent efforts to raise awareness of the plight of thousands of women and children taken hostage around the globe through its co-sponsoring of the biennial draft resolution of the Commission on the Status of Women on the release of women and children who have been taken hostage in armed conflict, including those who have been subsequently imprisoned.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm my Government's unwavering determination to combat trafficking in persons and other similar practices.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mrs. Alhefeiti (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I congratulate Italy on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and applaud its convening of today's open debate on human trafficking in conflict situations. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and all of the other briefers that we have heard from today.

The crime of human trafficking extends to all corners of the globe. No country is immune to its impact. We hope that today's debate will help all countries better confront the role of conflict and instability in exacerbating the problem of human trafficking.

Trafficking in persons is a source of concern, especially in our region, the Middle East, where war and displacement have torn apart communities and destroyed social protections. In such fragile contexts, Da'esh and other extremist and terrorist groups have horrifically exploited innocent people by making them combatants and forced labourers. These acts of terror are fundamentally tied to extremist ideologies. In exploiting the vulnerable, women and girls are disproportionately affected. As a global champion of gender equality and women's empowerment, the United Arab Emirates believes that this situation is a cause for grave concern. Women are the cornerstones of their families and communities. Therefore, crimes committed against them have ramifications for all of society.

The United Arab Emirates takes human trafficking very seriously, both at home and around the world. Since 2007, the United Arab Emirates has developed legal frameworks, policies and social infrastructure to help fight human trafficking. Through its comprehensive strategy, our National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking tracks rates of incidence and prosecution so as to hold perpetrators accountable, works with agencies to aid survivors of human trafficking with counselling, shelter and residency or resettlement, trains law enforcement entities on anti-trafficking, and spreads public awareness of the crime throughout the Emirates.

In order to truly eradicate the problem, we know that while we must stop trafficking within our own borders, we must also cooperate with countries where trafficking originates. The United Arab Emirates is working with national Governments to ensure legitimate migration channels by promoting the rule of law to protect citizens and by offering economic opportunities to prevent the circumstances that open the door for traffickers to exploit individuals. To that end, the United Arab Emirates has created memorandums of understanding with five countries — most recently India — to help address the conditions in countries of origin.

The United Arab Emirates calls for two actions to combat human trafficking at the international level and especially for dealing with the crisis in our region. The first is integration. Combating human trafficking poses challenges that are as numerous as they are complex. As such, addressing human trafficking must be holistically integrated into any responses to conflicts and crises around the world, particularly in our region. Integrated responses can be achieved by advancing cooperation between the public and private sectors, which should be facilitated by the United Nations.

Secondly, human trafficking is inherently linked to the current state of global migration. As such, the agreement on and adoption of the forthcoming global compact for safe, regular, and orderly migration must include provisions that address human trafficking. We call on Member States to engage in this process in order to ensure a positive outcome. These actions are aimed at addressing the problem of human trafficking, but we must also address its root causes, which is done through a strategy of prevention that includes sustainable and inclusive development for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): My delegation commends Italy for convening today's important open debate on trafficking of persons in conflict situations and welcomes the informative briefings. We also take note of the report of the Secretary-General on trafficking in persons in conflict, pursuant to resolution 2331 (2016) (S/2017/939). We also take note of the briefings by the representatives of the African Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and welcome and appreciate their strong messages.

Kenya also pays special homage to Italy. Its response to the migration crisis has been exemplary, humane and civilized. The Government and the people of Italy should be recognized for their humanity and determination to project a human face to the crisis that we are confronting.

Kenya condemns any form of human trafficking and views it as an unacceptable affront to humankind. Persons in areas affected by crises are especially vulnerable to trafficking and other forms of exploitation, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, removal of organs and slavery. We recall the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Chibok by Boko Haram, which was a chilling reminder of how trafficking has evolved into a weapon of terror that has been adopted by criminals. No country or region is safe from these contemporary forms of transnational organized crime.

Kenya is a signatory to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and has enacted laws and initiated policies to implement Security Council resolutions. The Kenya Counter-trafficking in Persons Act has established the necessary institutional mechanisms for the protection and support of trafficked persons, which include rehabilitation centres for victims of trafficking. We also pay particular attention to issues of illegal adoption of children, economic and sexual exploitation, slavery and forced labour.

The Victims Protection Act was enacted primarily to protect vulnerable victims rescued from traffickers. Our national plan of action offers a coherent and realizable road map to address and combat human trafficking, including through raising awareness and, at the same time, prominently profiling human trafficking issues in public as well as in media circles. Kenya calls for enhanced international cooperation to enable all Member States to hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities committed in the form of trafficking and other related crimes.

Like others, my delegation wishes to draw the attention of the Security Council to the abhorrent situation in Libya, where Africans are being auctioned like chattel in open slave markets. Nothing can be more distressing and abhorrent than slavery that is being practiced overtly, in broad daylight and in front of news cameras.

The International Court of Justice identified protection from slavery as an obligation towards all persons, one that is owed by every State to the international community as a whole. The practice of slavery has been universally recognized as a crime against humanity, and the right to be free from enslavement is considered so fundamental that all nations with standing in the context of this particular issue are expected to be able to bring the matter to the International Court of Justice of their own free will.

I wish to remind the Council that the adoption of resolution 1973 (2011) significantly contributed to the breakdown of law and order in Libya. This resolution, which was adopted against the will of the African Union, will always remain a stigma for and indictment of the Security Council. It was indeed short-sighted and a sign of hubris, and it has caused more suffering and distress than it sought to address. It is the Security Council's action that has led to Libya's 1,100-mile coastline becoming an open border for traffickers and smugglers who have become merchants of death and untold human suffering. The Security Council therefore has a special obligation to address the situation in Libya and to do so with the same determination that it sought to adopt resolution 1973 (2011).

Tragically, the plight of migrants crossing through Libya has been exacerbated by the European Union policy of financing, training and equipping undefined groups in Libya to intercept and contain migrants trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea and put them in detention camps. This policy is inhumane and should compel the international community to rise in righteous indignation and condemnation and to demand an immediate end to these discriminatory, if not racist, policies of the European Union, which offend the human conscience and abet the horrific violation of human

rights. Although resolution 1973 (2011) is the original sin that paved the way to the opening of slave markets in Libya, this dire situation is now being reinforced by the European Union's sad and discriminatory responses towards migrants.

The European Union must lead in seeking humane and sustainable solutions for the migrants in detention camps in Libya, including how to deal with those who have already been sold into slavery. The solutions must include creating legal pathways for the migrants, seeking their resettlement in third countries and voluntary repatriation in dignity for those willing to return to their countries of origin and ensuring their human rights are not further violated.

Kenya calls for swift action to stop the slave auctions, requesting that the Security Council ensures their immediate cessation and that those being held in prisons or in other deplorable conditions are rescued. Kenya also calls on the Security Council to work in close consultation with the African Union to appoint a joint commission of inquiry to comprehensively investigate and inquire into the matter. We are convinced that these are the issues most worthy of our urgent action as they are the most blatant violations of human rights that we have seen in our time.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Suan (Myanmar): My delegation thanks the Italian presidency of the Council for convening this important open debate and for its concept note (S/2017/972, annex), which paves the way for the effective deliberation on the subject before us. Myanmar aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The menace of trafficking in persons, or modern-day slavery, has become an increasingly global threat affecting all countries around the world. We share the deep concern of the Secretary-General on the news reports of African migrants allegedly being sold as slaves today. As the issue of trafficking in persons is increasingly transnational in nature, we all must work together bilaterally, regionally and internationally to address this global menace.

We welcome the adoption of the political declaration on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons (General Assembly resolution 72/1). Myanmar also welcomes the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime's (UNODC) technical assistance programmes for trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants to support the Member States in the implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, in close cooperation with the United Nations country offices and other partners.

For our part, Myanmar has been stepping up its efforts of combating issues of trafficking in persons as a national cause over the past 20 years. We are focusing our actions on the areas of prevention, protection, prosecution and policy coordination. In 2005, we enacted our anti-trafficking in persons law. The anti-trafficking law-enforcement unit has been strengthened, and awareness-raising activities have been conducted across the country.

Myanmar is closely cooperating with the countries in the region through the signing of bilateral agreements and establishing appropriate mechanisms. In the regional context, early this year, Myanmar ratified the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Convention on Trafficking in Persons. As a State party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, we are working closely with countries of the region and with United Nations agencies, particularly the UNODC, to fight against trafficking. Myanmar believes that cooperation among countries should be strengthened through accepted legal frameworks.

Humanitarian crises caused by natural disasters or conflicts create situations where people living in the affected areas become vulnerable to the threat of trafficking. This phenomenon cannot be eliminated by actions of the Governments alone. We need to engage constructively with the private sector. Therefore, I thank the Governments of Australia and Indonesia for their initiative in organizing the Bali Process Government and Business Forum in August 2017 to discuss and make recommendations on supply-chain transparency, preventing trafficking in persons and modern-day slavery.

Preventive measures are crucial in addressing the issue of trafficking in persons. Apart from the extreme circumstances of conflict and natural disaster, poverty, overpopulation and the lack of job opportunities in many less-developed countries also constitute root causes of trafficking. Therefore, we encourage all

stakeholders to make effective use of the relevant goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the global efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

The fight against such trafficking needs to be based on cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination. Politicizing the fight against trafficking in persons should be avoided as that would not serve as a solution to the problem.

The 25 August terrorist attacks against 30 Myanmar police stations and one military base and subsequent acts of terrorism have triggered an extremely tragic humanitarian situation in the Rakhine state of Myanmar. We also share the concern that the people who have fled across the border to Bangladesh may fall into the hands of traffickers. With the aim of taking measures to prevent such situation, Myanmar participated in the ad hoc meeting convened by the Governments of Australia and Indonesia last month in Jakarta.

In a good-neighbourly spirit, we are actively working with Bangladesh on the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the people who are taking refuge on the Bangladesh side. The repatriation process will start in three weeks after signing a bilateral agreement for the arrangement of their repatriation. A joint working group will be set up to coordinate the process of repatriation. We strongly hope to sign the bilateral agreement on repatriation arrangements very soon so that the repatriation process may begin as soon as possible.

While the humanitarian situation is in the focus of the international community, we must not lose sight of the other important facts about the situation in the area, where there is credible evidence of the continuing activities of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army terrorist group and its affiliates. The terrorists are now taking refuge in hideouts in the mountains and among the innocent people of the region. Reportedly, they have been funded by people abroad. We must all be vigilant to deter any traffickers or criminal networks seeking to exploit this situation for malicious purposes.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Myanmar's commitment to making its utmost efforts to prevent people from falling into the hands of traffickers.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of The Netherlands.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I should like to express my thanks to you personally, Sir, for being here at this late hour. Your presence is most appreciated. The Kingdom of the Netherlands thanks you for having convened this open debate and congratulates you on the unanimous adoption of resolution 2388 (2017). We also wish to thank today's briefers and Secretary-General Guterres for his leadership in addressing human trafficking. We support the statement you delivered earlier, Sir, in the context of our split term with Italy in the Security Council. I should also like to reiterate and underscore the words of my counterpart from Kenya in appreciation of Italy's policies.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the observer of the European Union.

I should also like to highlight the presence in my delegation, sitting behind me, of the Acting Prime Minister of Saint Maarten, Mr. Rafael Boasman, who is in New York for the Caribbean Conference on Comprehensive Disaster Management. As the members of the Council know, Saint Maarten was heavily damaged by Hurricane Irma.

The recent appalling reports on human trafficking in Libya further underscore the importance of today's open debate. We fully support yesterday's statement by the African Union and welcome the Secretary-General's call for the situation to be investigated. Stopping human trafficking in conflict situations, such as those in Libya and the Sahel, is a shared responsibility that requires a common effort.

In that context, I should like to focus on three important aspects: prevention, protection and prosecution.

First, on prevention, ideally we would eradicate the root causes of human trafficking and prevent it from occurring in the first place. The first step towards doing so is to enhance information position. United Nations entities operating in conflict and post-conflict situations play an important role in that regard. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation that this role be strengthened by including the issue of human trafficking in country assessments and predeployment trainings. We must also enhance our understanding of the relationship between human trafficking and the financing of terrorism so as to destroy this gruesome business model. The Netherlands will support the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate in identifying this relationship and gather good practices to address it.

Secondly, on protection, trafficking in human beings is an act that constitutes a gross violation of human rights. It is therefore crucial for the United Nations and its Member States to prioritize the protection of victims. The Kingdom of the Netherlands does its share by supporting migrant-rescue operations in the Sahel and the reintegration of victims of human trafficking.

Thirdly, on prosecution, the perpetrators of human trafficking thrive in a climate of impunity. They must be arrested, detained and prosecuted. And if, for whatever reason, we are not able to do so immediately, we should look for other ways to sanction their behavior in the meantime.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands commends the Secretary-General for referring in his report (S/2017/939) to the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Crime Threats on trafficking in human beings. This partnership, coordinated by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, brings together European Union member States, INTERPOL and others to share knowledge and jointly investigate human trafficking cases.

In conclusion, partnerships are at the heart of our shared responsibility and shared efforts to stop human trafficking. We welcome the steps taken by the United Nations to enhance coordination. We encourage all Member States to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. We also encourage the Security Council to address irregular migration, including human trafficking, in a more structured way in mission mandates and reporting.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands stands ready to take up its responsibility on these issues during our term on the Security Council next year in the context of our split term with Italy.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Margaryan (Armenia): We thank the Italian presidency for having organized today's open debate and initiating the adoption earlier today of resolution 2388 (2017), aimed at facilitating the global fight against human trafficking. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2017/939) and the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons for their briefings.

Trafficking in human beings is a global challenge and should be addressed collectively and holistically at all levels. The Government of Armenia declared the fight against human trafficking a priority and has initiated numerous reforms at the national level and cooperated closely with all international organizations active in the field. Activities aimed at fighting human trafficking in Armenia are coordinated by an interministerial council on the fight against trafficking in human beings and exploitation.

With a view to structuring the fight against trafficking in persons and to fully aligning Armenia's efforts with international best practices in the area of combatting this scourge, consecutive national action plans on fighting exploitation and trafficking in human beings in the Republic of Armenia have been adopted and implemented. Over the past decade, Armenia has successfully implemented four national action plans. While the main objective of the initial action plans was to create a sound legislative framework and to carry out assistance and protection projects for the victims of trafficking, the focus has now shifted towards prevention-related activities through relevant structural, sub-legislative and financial frameworks, along with strengthening the professional and institutional capacities of the main stakeholders involved. Armenia's efforts in combatting trafficking have been widely recognized in reputable reports on trafficking in persons.

The prevention of trafficking is a crucial component of the global fight against this scourge. The identification of situations involving trafficking or risks of trafficking, and assistance to and the protection of victims and potential victims, through strong partnership between national authorities and civil society organizations, are especially important.

Armenia is committed to the global fight against trafficking in persons in all circumstances and remains ready to continue its active engagement and cooperation with international partners. We also highlight the need for adequate training for all stakeholders, including peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel, in identifying and tackling the risks of trafficking, especially as regards women and children, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and programmes, international organizations and civil society institutions.

The activities of terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other armed groups engaged in human trafficking continue to be of grave concern. We fully agree with the assertion in the Secretary-General's report that as the ISIL stronghold in Iraq and the Syrian Arabic Republic rapidly recedes, it is imperative that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes be brought to justice and held accountable.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8112

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

8112th meeting

Wednesday, 22 November 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Cardi	(Italy)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Bessho
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermudez Alvarez

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/880)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2017/881)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Sixteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2017/880)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017) (S/2017/881)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jan Kubiš, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, and Major Anna Patrono, Arma dei Carabinieri Team Leader of the First Female Policing Course in Baghdad.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/880, which contains the sixteenth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), as well as to document S/2017/881, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2367 (2017).

I now give the floor to Mr. Jan Kubiš.

Mr. Kubiš: I would like to start by congratulating the Iraqi Government and people on their historic victory against the Da'esh terrorist group and its so-called caliphate. On 17 November, the Iraqi security forces fully recaptured the Rawa district, the last remaining area under Da'esh control in Iraq, although some mopping-up operations continue. Iraqis took back their country through the heroism and sacrifices of the Iraqi security forces, including the popular mobilization forces, working alongside the Peshmerga and tribal forces, supported by neighbouring countries and the Global Coalition against Da'esh.

This victory has come at a very high cost. Many thousands of fighters and civilians have been killed or wounded, leaving behind thousands of widows and orphans, hundreds of thousands of brainwashed children deprived of a proper education and entire cities in ruins, while some 6 million people have been displaced from their homes in several waves. Many thousands of people from both Muslim and minority communities — particularly women and girls — have been exterminated or enslaved by Da'esh in inhuman ways as a result of war crimes, crimes against humanity and possibly even genocide.

I should also underline the sacrifices of those who have been selflessly sheltering millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs), including in Kurdistan. Our condolences today go to all the victims of the war against Da'esh. Da'esh is down but not yet out — even in Iraq. The military victory is only one component of a complex battle. Only by defeating its takfirist ideology, cutting off its external support and addressing the causes that have prompted so many Iraqis to join or tolerate Da'esh can it finally be terminated. I encourage the global coalition against Da'esh, including the countries of the region and the wider international community, to continue both military and non-military efforts — and especially by increasing the latter — aimed at helping Iraq to ensure Da'esh's permanent, sustainable defeat.

In Iraq, while continuing humanitarian assistance, priority must be given to facilitating the speedy and voluntary return of IDPs under conditions of safety and security, as well as to demining, stabilization, reconstruction and rehabilitation, which will also help minorities and create the conditions needed for their safe and sustainable future in a post-Da'esh Iraq. An international conference planned for February in Kuwait, on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq, should affirm the lasting commitment of the international community, including the countries of the region. Those efforts should complement support for security-sector reform, aimed at increasing the country's ability to fully enforce law and order against the continued presence of the multitude of armed groups outside State control, including criminal gangs, militias and tribal elements.

Just as the country is beginning to breathe a sigh of relief at the defeat of the Da'esh terrorists, many long-standing unresolved issues, until now overshadowed by the urgency of fighting Da'esh, are once again coming to the fore. Prominent among them are the tensions between the central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, prompted by complaints on both sides regarding deficiencies in implementing the

Constitution. The response of the Kurdistan regional authorities was to hold an independence referendum on 25 September — against the will of Baghdad and the advice of the regional countries and the international community — in the Kurdistan region and the disputed territories under its control since 2014.

Challenged by the referendum, the Government of Iraq took determined steps to re-establish federal authority over its external border-crossing points, the international airports in the Kurdistan region and the disputed territories, as well as over oil exports. On 16 October, federal security forces launched operations in Kirkuk and proceeded rapidly through other disputed territories, going almost as far as the so-called green line of 2003. Although in most cases the withdrawal of Peshmerga forces from those areas took place in coordination with the Iraqi security forces, sporadic clashes did occur. Even now, however, control over some disputed areas and border crossings, including Fish Khabur, remains unresolved. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) received reports of civilian casualties, primarily from the Kurdish community in Kirkuk, Tuz Khurmatu and other areas. I welcome the measures taken by Prime Minister Al Abadi to enforce law and order through the federal forces in areas that have witnessed an increase in violence as a prerequisite for the mostly Kurdish IDPs to return to their homes. I also urge the competent authorities, both federal and of the Kurdistan region, to carry out prompt and impartial investigations into all incidents and to bring those responsible to justice.

On 6 November, the federal Supreme Court concluded that it did not find any provision in the Constitution authorizing the secession of any component of the federal system of the Republic of Iraq. On 20 November, the federal Supreme Court decided that the referendum was unconstitutional and that all of its results and effects should be cancelled. The Government of Iraq welcomed both decisions. On 14 November, the Kurdistan Regional Government confirmed its respect for the federal Supreme Court's interpretation of article 1 of the Iraqi Constitution, and thereby the unity of Iraq, pursuant to its decision of 6 November. Following the second verdict of the federal Supreme Court on 20 November, Kurdistan's Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani again affirmed his respect for the Constitution, noting that the federal Supreme Court's rulings are final and cannot be challenged.

UNAMI has repeatedly called on all sides to refrain from the threat or use of force and from inflammatory statements and confrontational steps. Our message is clear. All outstanding issues between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government must be resolved through a constructive partnership dialogue aimed at arriving at sustainable solutions on the basis of the Constitution that will also guarantee the full constitutional rights of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and its people. Now that the issue of the referendum has found its constitutional resolution, UNAMI urges for the continuation of the high-level intergovernmental dialogue on military and security issues, in order to avoid confrontations during the deployment of federal forces in the disputed areas and to enable federal authority to be established over Iraq's external border crossings, including the international airports in the Kurdistan region, with the aim of enabling their reopening for international flights as soon as possible.

UNAMI also calls for an immediate start to negotiations with Government representatives on other key matters, such as the budget, salaries and oil exports. UNAMI has offered its support for such negotiations, should the parties request it. In the wake of the resignation letter received on 29 October from the-then Kurdistan Regional President, Masoud Barzani, the regional parliament promulgated a law that temporarily redistributed his presidential powers among the executive, legislative and judiciary. It has given Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and his Deputy, Qubad Talabani, the heavy responsibility of finding a way out of the region's political, economic and social crisis and steering Baghdad-Erbil relations away from confrontation. For that, they will need the support of every sector of Kurdistani society and its political forces as the Regional Government works on solutions to the crisis.

UNAMI continues to engage with Iraqi political parties to advance national reconciliation and settlement, working with the Government of Iraq to identify key priorities and deliverables over the next few months in the run-up to the national and provincial elections in May. Social reconciliation, focused on the return of IDPs, is now a critical priority.

On 23 October, a new Board of Commissioners for the Independent High Electoral Commission was approved by the Council of Representatives. It was a major disappointment for Iraqi civil society and UNAMI that, for the first time, no women were appointed to the

Board. Elections for the Governorate councils and the Council of Representatives are scheduled to take place on 15 May 2018, in accordance with the Constitution, and the Constitution should be fully respected in this respect as well.

The elections will face a number of challenges, including the first-time use of new voting technology, the holding of two simultaneous elections, a tight timeline, pending provincial council and parliamentary elections laws, and security concerns, notably in the areas where internally displaced persons have returned to their homes. I urge that these challenges be resolutely addressed in the months to come. Otherwise, holding elections when parts of Iraq remain insecure and large numbers of people, particularly from the Sunni communities, continue to be displaced could cast doubts on the inclusiveness and credibility of the elections and thus the acceptability of its results both internally and abroad.

Humanitarian partners have reached more than 6 million Iraqis this year, including 2 million impacted by military operations in Mosul. The Iraq Humanitarian Response Plan has received 71 percent of the $985 million required for 2017. We ask partners to continue to make their generous contributions so as to ensure that the people who have suffered the most receive the assistance they need.

Through the Funding Facility for Immediate Stabilization of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), more than 1,460 projects have either been completed, are under development or are being implemented in 23 liberated cities and districts in Anbar, Salah al-Din, Diyala and Ninewa governorates. More than 95 per cent of all stabilization projects implemented under the Funding Facility are undertaken by the local private sector. We are committed to ensuring that the more than 200 projects under way in priority Christian and Yezidi towns are implemented as quickly as possible. In the year ahead, the UNDP estimates that $289 million is needed to stabilize priority locations in liberated areas, and we are appealing to donor countries to step forward to provide these urgently needed resources. Demining is a critical priority, and the United Nations Mine Action Service needs continued support as well.

On the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, the Government of Iraq is fully cognizant of its international and humanitarian obligations relating to the file. Since assuming a proactive role last year, the Iraqi Ministry of Defence has made impressive efforts, including through exploration and excavation, to identify additional grave sites. The long-awaited review report of the International Committee of the Red Cross was submitted to last week's forty-fifth Tripartite Committee meeting in Cyprus. It offers an exhaustive historical overview and technical assessment of all aspects of previous search efforts for burial sites, and makes concrete recommendations on prioritization and further exploration of specific locations. Members of the Tripartite Commission will work together to translate the recommendations into a plan of action.

In November, Alice Walpole, my newly appointed Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance, took charge of this file in accordance with resolution 2107 (2013). I would like to thank former Deputy Special Representative Gyorgy Busztin for his excellent work, efforts and commitment to the file since the adoption of the resolution in 2013.

The President: I thank Mr. Kubiš for his comprehensive briefing.

I now give the floor to Major Patrono.

Major Patrono: It is a great pleasure and honour for me to attend this meeting, and I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to brief its members on Italy's commitment in the field of stability policing, a sector in which the *Carabinieri* have established themselves as one of the most innovative and reliable partners for international organizations, including the United Nations.

In April 2017, I had the honour to act as team leader during the first female policing course delivered by the *Carabinieri* for the Iraqi Federal Police in Baghdad. Indeed, the *Carabinieri* have been exercising a leadership role in the framework of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq since 2015, when a task force was deployed to lead and coordinate all training initiatives for the Iraqi Federal Police. Our main mission is to enhance the capabilities of Iraq's police forces through training, advising and assisting them so that they can play a primary role in the stabilization of the country. The Train, Advise and Assist Task Force was recently renamed the "Police Task Force-Iraq" in order to emphasize the specificity of this contribution within the framework of the Global Coalition.

The Police Task Force-Iraq coordinates the training initiatives delivered to all religious and ethnic groups represented in the Iraqi Police. In this context, the respect for gender balance truly constitutes the backbone of the *Carabinieri* strategy in crisis management. The reason for this is simple: strengthening women's participation in the police and improving women's role and influence in post-conflict environments can dramatically improve the overall effectiveness of stabilization efforts, especially at the local level. This objective is achieved by performing a dedicated training for female police personnel through separate female policing courses. In total, in two courses performed in Baghdad in April and July, some 100 police personnel have already been trained, and our plan is to continue training many more in the coming months.

The main purpose of the first female policing course was to increase the knowledge and awareness of fundamental human rights in order to deliver a suitable training on gender-related law-enforcement techniques and tactical procedures. The course, which took place at the Civil Defence Training Centre in Baghdad over a two-week period, was specifically tailored to 40 Iraqi female police officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers.

Trainees took part in classes and lectures on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which we consider an essential precondition for every training initiative. Special attention was devoted to enhancing the ability to carry out investigations designed to counter sexual and gender-based violence, as well as crimes against the most vulnerable groups. This is a crucial point that I wish to emphasize — there is a direct correlation between the availability of well-trained, empowered female police officers and the ability of effectively counter sexual and gender-based violence.

The second part of the course was focused on increasing trainees' basic competence and skills in self-defence, search and handcuffing techniques, inter alia. There were also interactive debriefings and discussions to promote respect for professional ethical principles and the code of conduct. The increased efficiency, integration and interoperability of the female police officers we have trained are now confirmed by their successful deployment for the purposes of stabilizing areas liberated from Da'esh, especially at the local level.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the Carabinieri strongly believe in the police training initiative in Iraq. We are of the view that the project has been a successful operational paradigm that we have also been able to apply to female police officers participating in Carabinieri training in Palestine, Djibouti and Somalia. With that in mind, I would also like to emphasize the innovative formula for stability policing that our Carabinieri in Iraq have adopted, driven by an inclusive approach and based on the goal of achieving long-term normalization, which has proved more effective when seen as an autonomous pillar of crisis-management operations and a catalyst for fostering lasting peace and stability.

On a final note, I would like to give special thanks to all of the women who have bravely pioneered the project and have worked tirelessly, painstakingly and with great sacrifice and commitment. Somebody asked us what we would bring back to Italy from the experience — as far as we are concerned, it has been seeing the desire to learn that shone in the eyes of our female students, the very mirrors of their souls.

The President: I thank Major Patrono for her briefing and the personal touches in it, as well as for the personal role that she has played in training female Iraqi security units.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Kubiš and Major Patrono for their informative briefings this morning, as well as for the important work that both the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Italian Carabinieri are doing in Iraq.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly highlight UNAMI's recently concluded independent external assessment, whose results we welcome. The Council launched the pilot initiative in an effort to shake up the United Nations approach to management review and in support of the Secretary-General's reform agenda. The study marks the first-ever external assessment of a special political mission's management structures and resources with a view to ensuring that they are being used effectively to optimize mandate implementation.

This external third-party review, conducted by expert consultants from outside the United Nations system, provides excellent recommendations for improving efficiency and accountability in the field so

as to enable the Council to make more informed strategic decisions on UNAMI's mandate and strengthen the Mission's ability to deliver on its mandate effectively. The United States supports the work of the assessment team and the creative solutions that it has put forward to promote more effective coordination and burden-sharing between the Mission and the United Nations country team, enabling them to be more responsive to Iraqis' needs. We hope the Secretary-General will give careful consideration to the team's suggestions and recommendations when he decides how best to address UNAMI's management and resourcing challenges. In a spirit of transparency regarding this Council-mandated management product, the United States urges the Secretary-General to share the full report with the Council so as to illustrate the challenges that United Nations field offices face in carrying out their critical peacebuilding missions.

Mr. Bermúdez Alvarez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would once again like to thank Mr. Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive and informative briefing and for the ongoing work that he and his team have been doing in an environment as complex as Iraq. I would also like to pay special tribute to Major Anna Patrono for sharing her very interesting experience in training the police corps in Iraq, and we congratulate her.

Uruguay recognizes the hard work that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the Special Representative have been doing in continued coordination with the Iraqi Government, making possible the close cooperation needed to tackle the multiple emergencies that they are facing at present. In that regard, the Security Council's confidence in its work and of the United Nations in Iraq generally was expressed in our unanimous vote in mid-July to extend UNAMI's mandate through resolution 2367 (2017).

I would like to begin by expressing sincere condolences on behalf of Uruguay to the victims' families and the Governments and peoples of Iraq and Iran in the wake of the earthquake on 12 November that left more than 500 dead and thousands injured near the border between the two countries. The resilience that the Iraqi people have shown so many times will surely also enable them to overcome that natural disaster as well.

We reiterate our congratulations to the Iraqi Government on its courage and its enormous effort during the military campaign to defeat Da'esh and drive it out of Iraq after enduring more than three years of unimaginable atrocities at its hands. That is a huge achievement for the international community as well as the Iraqi people and authorities, and an overwhelming victory over international terrorism. Uruguay hopes that this major victory represents a decisive step towards the ultimate overthrow of Da'esh, which has subjected the people under its control in Iraq and Syria to brutal attacks and slaughtered hundreds of innocent citizens in other countries. That victory should not make us lose sight of the very serious crimes committed by Da'esh fighters, who must not go unpunished. Resolution 2379 (2017), which the Council adopted exactly two months ago, has put measures in place to ensure accountability for war crimes, crimes against humanity and possible genocide committed by Da'esh. Bringing its leaders and those mainly responsible for its crimes to justice will help to discredit Da'esh's image by exposing their atrocities and should have a deterrent effect on potential followers or imitators. However, we reiterate that the fight against this scourge must be in line with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and agreed on here at the United Nations, in order to prevent any excessive responses.

Da'esh did not emerge from a vacuum. It was rather the product of a chain of events, including the effects of the unfortunate 2003 invasion of Iraq and the sectarian civil war that the country endured in the years following the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. That unstable situation was compounded by the ideological, financial, arms and human support provided by various countries in the region and beyond, at least at first. The liberation of Ramadi and Fallujah in 2016, the long and complex military campaign preceding the liberation of Mosul this year and the recent victories in Tal Afar and Hawija are only initial steps. While important, they are not enough to restore relative normality to Iraq. The Government has two major tasks that, with United Nations support, it must tackle immediately — rebuilding those cities and enabling its hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons to return home.

As we have always done, we commend the Iraqi Government for prioritizing the protection of civilians in its fight against terrorism, but it is now time to address the economic, social, health and psychological needs of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis who have been terrorized for far too long. One of the main goals of the United Nations and UNAMI is to support the

Iraqi Government in its reform efforts and find long-term political solutions that will enable it to combat extremism and ensure that the country will be stable enough to avoid any recurrence of phenomena such as that of Da'esh. Iraqi leaders must continue to work to overcome their ongoing divisions and historical mistrust so that they can reach a broad national reconciliation agreement that will enable them to turn the page on the many years of suffering that the Iraqi people have endured as a result of interreligious and ethnic divisions. As we have seen with the conflict in Iraq and others on the Security Council's agenda, it is relatively simple to establish military coalitions to fight a common enemy. We must work in that spirit to establish coalitions for dealing with post-conflict issues as well, with a view to de-escalating and reducing the internal tensions that inevitably persist after military conflicts have ended.

For that reason, we are concerned about the referendum held by the Kurdistan Regional Government in September, which regrettably led to clashes not only with the Iraqi Government but also with other countries in the region with Kurdish populations. We encourage both parties to engage in constructive dialogue so as to settle their differences without endangering Iraq's stability, unity and territorial integrity and in a way that safeguards the rights of all the ethnic groups and minorities that have inhabited the region for centuries. We condemn yesterday's suicide attack in Tuz Khurmatu in Salah Al-Din province south of Kirkuk — where Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens all live together — in which more than 20 died and dozens were injured.

Iraq is now facing a new and crucial chapter in its history. The victory over Da'esh will not be enough if the authorities fail to make concrete progress in combating corruption, involving all segments of society in the political life of the country and ensuring the protection of the human rights of all of its citizens, including women. With the support of UNAMI, it is their job to carry out the reforms that have been planned so as to enable Iraq to become more modern, inclusive and peaceful.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). We reiterate our support for his important work. We would also especially like to thank Major Anna Patrono for her briefing as well as for her presence today, and for showing the Council a clear example of effective cooperation and the strengthening of institutions in situations as complex as that in Iraq. We also appreciate the important work that UNAMI is doing in fulfilling its mandate, and we encourage its personnel to continue their progress in their dialogue and coordination efforts aimed at strengthening the peace and reconciliation process in Iraq.

We are pleased to see the successful campaigns that Iraqi security forces have been carrying out to liberate the people of Tall Afar, Akashat, Ana, Sharqat, Hawijah and Daquq from Da'esh control. We are also appreciate the priority that Iraqi security forces have given to protection measures for civilians and civil infrastructure in their military campaigns as they fight to definitively eradicate Da'esh from Iraq. We reiterate our sincere gratitude for the courage, sacrifice and determination that Iraqi security forces, and the Iraqi people as a whole, continue to show in their ongoing fight against terrorism on behalf of all of us.

We hope that the legislation and legal mechanisms required for the regional election processes planned for 2018 will be implemented in a participatory and inclusive manner and will enable elections to be held in a peaceful and orderly way to the benefit of the entire population. We believe that UNAMI's technical assistance will be very important to achieving that goal.

We are extremely concerned about the serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law reported by the Secretary-General. They include the atrocities that Da'esh continues to perpetrate in Iraq in the form of kidnappings, degrading treatment and torture, the recruitment of child combatants, the enslavement of more than 1,500 Yazidi women and the summary executions of civilians. The latter were discovered in August when the bodies of men, women and children were found in several mass graves in Mosul, in Ninawa governorate. In that regard, we support for the work that the Special Representative and the Iraqi Government are doing to establish an investigative team in accordance with resolution 2379 (2017), which will be key to identifying the perpetrators of such serious crimes and bringing them to justice, so that they can be duly investigated, prosecuted and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

We also regret the continuing asymmetric attacks that kill innocent civilians. During the period under discussion, 410 people, including women and children,

were reported killed and more than 600 wounded, 360 as a result of explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. In our view, clearing and removing such devices and remnants are a crucial part of peacebuilding, since they enable the tasks of rebuilding and restoring public services and securing access to humanitarian assistance to begin. Above all, they enable displaced populations to return safely to their homes and resume their normal lives. In that regard, we would like to highlight the work being done by the United Nations Mine Action Service in Iraq. It has succeeded in removing more than 700 explosive devices in Mosul, thereby helping refugees and internally displaced persons to return safely. We thank the Secretary-General for including the subject of mine action in today's report (S/2017/881). We hope that in the future we will see a report focused specifically on the activities of the Mine Action Service, in accordance with paragraph 15 of resolution 2365 (2017).

We appreciate the determination and efforts of the Iraqi Government to identify disappeared Kuwaiti citizens and to identify and return the property stolen from them during the conflict in 1990 and 1991. We encourage the parties involved to continue to redouble their efforts to bring about concrete results and to follow through on the reconciliation process being carried out by Iraq and Kuwait.

Finally, it is important to reiterate that policies of regime change, intervention and interference in the internal affairs of States have been one of the main reasons for the destruction of Iraq's State institutions and for weakening its forces of law and order, thereby facilitating the rise of terrorism and extremism in the region with the regrettable consequences that still persist today.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Italy on its presidency of the Security Council for this month and thank it for its efforts in organizing the Council's work. We would also like to thank France for its efforts during its presidency of the Council last month. We welcome the briefing by Mr. Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), and we thank him and his team for the efforts and dedication that they have shown in Baghdad, New York and wherever they are needed. I would also like to welcome the briefing by Major Anna Patrono of Italy's Arma dei Carabinieri on her very positive experience with female police in Baghdad. My delegation also commends the constructive efforts of the Government of Italy to strengthen Iraqi capabilities in various fields, in particular with regard to the Iraqi security forces, the preservation of artefacts and the repair of the Mosul dam.

Iraq's heroic armed forces have achieved a historic victory that has put an end to the so-called State of terror and extremism throughout Iraq following the liberation of Kirkuk, Hawijah and other cities. With enormous sacrifices, our brave forces have also succeeded in regaining the city of Al-Qa'im after the liberation of the nearby city of Rawa. Today I want to congratulate our armed forces and our proud people, who made sacrifices for this great victory, and to pay tribute to all of the honourable men and women of the civilized world who have supported Iraq and its heroic forces in the fight against the terrorist gangs of Da'esh. This truly glorious victory was achieved while taking great care to ensure the safety of the civilians whom the terrorists had used as human shields, and with full respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. Our forces are still eliminating terrorist pockets in the desert of Anbar governorate, securing the border between Iraq and Syria and opening joint border points that will enable commercial activity between both States to begin again.

The Government and the people of Iraq are deeply grateful to all the States that have participated in the international coalition for fighting terrorism in Iraq, in particular the United States of America and the States members of the European Union, as well as to others that are not part of the international coalition. We thank them all for their help in confronting terrorism and for the military and logistical support they have provided to Iraq's security forces, in the context of respect for our sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in coordination with our security forces, in order to defeat the terrorist gangs of Da'esh.

The Iraqi Government will continue to be one of unity, working to enhance constructive dialogue in order to settle the issues outstanding between the federal Government and the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government. In any case, we cannot accept the unconstitutional decisions of the Regional Government and thereby surrender the unity of Iraq, which is guaranteed under our Constitution. In that regard, with a view to preserving the unity of Iraq's territory and people, our Council of Representatives voted to

totally reject the referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan region and to commit the federal Government to taking measures to secure Iraq's unity under article 109 of the Iraqi Constitution. In addition, it decided to launch a serious dialogue aimed at dealing with any outstanding issues on the basis of article 1 of the Constitution, which stipulates that Iraq is a single State with a single sovereignty and cannot be partitioned.

In accordance with its responsibilities, the Iraqi Government requested the federal Supreme Court to issue a ruling rejecting the illegal referendum conducted by the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government on 25 September. The referendum represents a grave violation of the Iraqi Constitution, in particular with regard to the status of areas with peoples of various nationalities, ethnicities, sects and religions. The federal Supreme Court studied article 1 of the Constitution and explained that it and other articles affirm the unity of Iraq and that article 109 of the Constitution binds all federal Iraqi authorities to preserve and uphold that unity. The Supreme Court also stated that the Constitution does not include any text that would permit the secession of any parts of the country, as stipulated in article 116. On 20 November, the federal Supreme Court ruled that the referendum conducted in the Iraqi Kurdistan region on 25 September was unconstitutional, rendering its results null and void. That will require issuing a request to the Iraqi Kurdistan Government to respect and abide by that decision in accordance with the articles and provisions of the Iraqi Constitution, which governs the rights and responsibilities of all its components.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the countries around the world that have supported a unified Iraq of civilization, history and sacrifice in the face of international terrorism. We appreciate their support for Iraq's unity, sovereignty and federal Constitution. We also appreciate the support for our efforts to secure federal authority throughout Iraq's territory in order to preserve the lives of all Iraqi civilians and to ensure that the security of citizens is not delivered into the hands of the military wings of certain political parties that do not support Iraqi unity but rather seek to achieve their own illegal goals and conceal their corruption, smuggling and interference in the use of the State's resources. In that regard, we affirm that our oil and gas reserves are the property of the whole Iraqi people, not of individuals or political parties claiming ownership and funnelling their revenue to private accounts. It is important to ensure federal financial oversight of all funds collected from oil resources, airports and border crossings, which must be controlled by the federal Government, in line with the Iraqi Constitution.

Despite the incitement to killing and the military mobilization by the leadership of certain parties in northern Iraq, the Iraqi Government has exercised wisdom and self-restraint, ensuring the rule of law and the orderly deployment of federal forces so as to protect the security of all citizens regardless of their race, gender, religion or sect.

Iraq looks forward to holding parliamentary and legislative elections in mid-May 2018. Preparations by the political forces that represent all Iraqis have begun. The successful holding of the coming elections on the basis of a peaceful transfer of power will strengthen the political stability of Iraq's democratic and pluralistic political system within a lasting democracy that will help Iraq resist any crises. It will strengthen the country's stability and economic development in its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. The Council of Ministers has decided to ban any political party or entity with a military component from participating in the elections, based on the Iraqi Constitution, which prohibits the military from participating in elections.

The post-conflict phase poses a great challenge for us that surpasses even that of the war itself. We must therefore strive to re-establish stability, ensure reconstruction and rekindle hope following the liberation of our cities, achieved with enormous costs to human life and property and damage to the environment, which has been seriously degraded over the past three decades. That is in addition to the environmental terrorism perpetrated by the gangs of Da'esh, which have set fire to oil wells, ruined small dams, flooded agricultural land and destroyed artefacts and Iraq's ancient cultural heritage.

We are working for community-based reconciliation among the civilian population so that our citizens can feel reassured and the displaced can return home. The next stage will require genuine, serious cooperation if we are to prevent any relapses into terrorism and extremism. We have signed a partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Programme to promote civic and community-based reconciliation in Iraq and to enhance and promote the work of local peace committees to achieve sustainable, social peace

in the cities that have been liberated from the terrorist gangs of Da'esh.

Iraq also greatly appreciates the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2379 (2017), on the collection and preservation of evidence of the crimes committed by Da'esh terrorist gans in Iraq. Efforts in this area should be directed at enhancing Iraq's sovereignty, maintaining its jurisdiction and reinforce the capabilities of its judiciary in investigating serious international crimes. That will help to strengthen the rule of law, put an end to impunity for terrorists and ensure that they are punished for their terrible crimes in Iraq. This historic resolution is the result of constructive cooperation between Iraq and the Security Council. The decision to criminalize Da'esh is a victory for human justice and the organization's victims. It is also an expression of a practical rejection of the savagery of Da'esh and an effective condemnation of its uncivilized behaviour. The prosecution of these criminals, and denying them impunity, will act as send strong messages of deterrence. It will also reassure countries all over the world through the strong warning it sends to those who support Da'esh financially, ideologically or through the media. We call on Member States and international and regional organizations to help the investigative team in its work and offer it all the assistance it will need to strengthen the Iraqi legal and judicial system so as to promote the rule of law and put an end to impunity.

There is a growing need for the support that the international community has to offer, including by participating in the reconstruction of the liberated areas and the restoration of ordinary livelihoods for Iraqis as soon as possible. Moreover, as a result of the war on terrorism and the efforts that have been directed to liberation operations, other construction projects as result of the war on terror and the participation of the population in the liberation campaigns. They have also seen limited opportunities for development and an increase in the number of orphans and widows, and they must be included in any reconstruction projects. We look forward to the international community's effective participation in the donor conference to be held in Kuwait early next year, and we appreciate the genuine efforts that are being made to help Iraq and alleviate the suffering of the displaced.

We would also like to renew our call on companies in friendly States to invest in our economy, including the energy, housing, transportation and health-care sectors, as well as in the construction of schools and communications infrastructure. We want to point out that we have established laws and a legislative environment that are friendly to companies and investors.

The Government of Iraq is hoping to deepen its relationship with its regional partners for its own development and in order to enhance bilateral cooperation on issues that are important to the peoples of the region, by arriving at a joint plan to enhance general stability in the region and lower the level of conflict and the flow of terrorists, in accordance with the common interests and a vision that will positively affect the lives and security of the citizens of the region. Our Prime Minister, Mr. Haider Al Abadi, has made many constructive visits to friendly countries, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Iran and Turkey, in order to lay clearly defined foundations for cooperation in various areas so as to promote security in the region, which is indivisible.

Where Syria is concerned, Iraq welcomes the efforts by Russia, Iran and Turkey and by those who are working to arrive at a comprehensive, intra-Syrian solution acceptable to all Syrian parties. It should be eliminate terrorist gangs and cut off all international and regional support. It must also reduce the recruitment of more terrorists, which only funnels more such fighters to the battlefield. It must be a solution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian State and helps rid it of the scourge of terrorism, destruction, displacement and murder, while ultimately achieving stability and security in the region. We greatly appreciate Kazakhstan's efforts to ensure success in the Astana talks, and congratulate its leadership on the steps that it has taken to consolidate peace and help bring together the views of Syrians under the umbrella of the United Nations.

Our relationship with our sister State of Kuwait, which has stood by Iraq during difficult times, is a close one, based on firm foundations of constructive cooperation and fraternity. Iraq is working hard to locate the missing Kuwaiti persons and prisoners and Kuwaiti archives. The most recent meeting of the relevant technical subcommittee was held in Kuwait on 8 August. The competent Iraqi authorities continue to take into consideration the legal and human aspects of the issue and to work diligently to locate the remains of Kuwaiti victims. They have been documenting and verifying information provided by witnesses and have also conducted field visits and several excavation operations in various locations in attempts to locate the

remains of missing Kuwaiti persons and prisoners. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iraq has continued to place advertisements across various media platforms, including newspapers and official television channels, aimed at encouraging anyone with information regarding the fate of missing Kuwaiti persons and prisoners to contact the competent authorities.

With regard to the report on UNAMI submitted by the independent external assessment team, the relevant Iraqi authorities have taken note of the report and will study it, especially the recommendations pertaining to UNAMI's mandate and the priorities suggested by the team, at which point we will offer our official opinion about what the Government sees as necessary in the upcoming stage, which will be one of reconstruction, aimed at strengthening and increasing Iraqi society's immunity to terrorist ideology. We hope that this reconstruction will enable us to achieve economic prosperity, the voluntary return of the displaced to their cities and secure basic services. In that regard, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation for the efforts of the independent external assessment team in compiling its report. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to identify the next steps. There will be a process of evaluating the report's recommendations in order to implement measures that will help UNAMI move forward and provide the services that the Iraqi people expect from its presence in Iraq, hand in hand with the United Nations country team.

In conclusion, we would like to once again express our thanks for the work being carried out by Special Representative Kubiš and his team in advising the Iraqi Government. We thank UNAMI for its activities aimed at preserving the unity of Iraq and its territorial integrity and stability so that it may at last be free of terrorism. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my country's deep gratitude to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. György Busztin, for his efforts and diligence, as well as for the legacy that he has left in Iraq. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.